

RAMDAS SPEAKS

VOLUME VI



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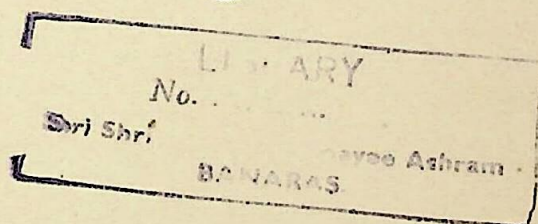
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LONDON,
25th September, 1954

Speech at Shanti Sadan of Dr. Hariprasad Sastri

Beloved Friends, — Ramdas was not prepared to deliver something like a speech on this occasion. We had the intention of coming to Shanti Sadan with the sole object of having the Darshan of Sri Hariprasad Sastriji, and when we asked over the 'phone whether we could come to Shanti Sadan, he willingly agreed and we felt Divine grace had come to us, and accordingly when we came here, he gave us a very warm welcome. After a few words with him, which gave Ramdas infinite joy, we are now in your midst and we feel extremely happy.

Ramdas is speaking in the third person and you will kindly bear with him. Some years ago when God accepted him as His child and servant, the ego-sense in him disappeared and from that time he has been speaking about himself in the third person. Ramdas is a child and servant of God and as such by God's command he has left India and come to Europe, and from here he is going to the United States of America, Japan and other places round the world. The sole object with which he was sent out from India by God is to spread the ideal of universal love and service.

CHARM OF WORDS - LOVE AND SERVICE

Love and service — these two words have a great fascination and charm for Ramdas. Love is of two kinds: human love and divine love. Human love relates to the physical part of us — the appearance, and divine love relates to the immortal Spirit dwelling within us. What we have to cultivate is divine love. This can be achieved only when we realise our real nature and being. Divine love is based on our knowledge of the Self. This love naturally expresses itself in service and that service, as it is based on the negation of the ego, is pure and selfless.

Love then becomes universal in its character and content. In this connection Ramdas is reminded of the advice of Yajnavalkya to Maitreyi, 'Love your husband not for the sake of the husband, but for the sake of the Self. Love your father, mother and son

not for the sake of the physical relationship, but for the sake of the Self.' In every one of us the same Self exists and we are only so many expressions of the Self. If we want to truly love another, we can do so only when we know that we are not different from him and he is but another body of ours. Verily, the immortal Self within us has assumed innumerable forms. So we have to see the whole universe as the expression of the Self. Then only our love flows out in floods to all beings and creatures in the world equally. We cannot but like everybody alike, irrespective of caste, creed or nationality. This is the love we have to gain, and from this love proceeds service which is rendered equally to all beings. Wherever we see people suffering and in distress, there our heart goes out and we serve them. So you will see that universal service is based on universal love and universal love is based on universal vision, which is again based on the knowledge of the Self.

DO NOT LIVE LIKE ANIMALS

This is the aim and object of human existence. God has granted us this human body in order that we may realise the glory of our Divine existence in which individual consciousness is absent. In fact, we are one with God at all times. But we have forgotten this truth and therefore we feel separated from Him. The sense of separation will go when the light of knowledge dawns in us. This knowledge gives us the realisation that we are one with Him and that He Himself is manifest as the whole universe. Therefore to feel one with Him is to feel one with all the beings and creatures in the world. Firstly, we have to realise that we are the Self and not the body. The sense of separation between us and the Self is due to the veil of ignorance that covers our souls. It is when this veil is broken that we realise our unity, i. e., see unity in diversity and oneness in multiplicity. This is the goal of human existence. If we do not attain this blessed state, we will be living only like animals enjoying the pleasures of the senses, remaining always conscious of the body. Our aspiration should be to realise the Self and allow our body to wear itself out in the service of everybody.

THERE IS NONE SO DEAR AS GOD

Thus universal love and universal service go together. To propagate this ideal Ramdas has been going from place to place as

willed by his Divine Master. This does not mean that you do not possess this ideal. Ramdas has come to talk to you all about God — the universal Truth, who is so dear to him, who is the breath of his breath, the soul of his soul and the life of his life. God is dear to you also. He is the deity of your heart and no other object^e is so dear to you as He. When we all talk about the supreme Truth we feel our union with Him and also know that we are His expressions and we thereby realise a peace that passeth all understanding. The peace comes to us only by tuning our mind with God. When we live in this eternal peace^e we realise the unity of all creation and produce an atmosphere of harmony and peace. The world is lacking this harmony and peace because it has forgotten God. The moment all of us tune our hearts with God and remain in the consciousness of Him, the war clouds that hang over us will be scattered and we will have a world filled with peace, harmony, goodwill and happiness.

This is the message delivered to us by the ancient Rishis of India and great souls from other parts of the world. We have to make our lives sublime by following their teachings. We should divinise our existence by realising that we and God are not separate and therefore we and the universe are not separate. If we only listen and act up to their inspired teachings, we can make our life supremely blessed.

With these few words you will kindly permit this child to close this short speech.

LONDON,

26th September, 1954.

Speech at the Hindu Association of Europe, London.

Beloved Friends, — Ramdas is a humble child of God. By His will he has left India on a world tour with the object of propagating the ideal of universal love and service. Universal love and service is based upon universal vision. Again universal vision is based upon the knowledge of God as the immutable, all-pervading, static Brahman. On the realisation of this state alone we can practise true love and service. Love and service can be possible only when we are free from selfishness. Where there is no selfishness, our life flows out spontaneously in the service of our fellow beings. In this vision of the Reality we realise the oneness of mankind through the Spirit. Although we appear to be different from each other on the surface, at the base we are one. This is the message of Vedanta and of all the great sages of the world. As we have not recognised the inner kinship of the Spirit, we are creating so much chaos in the world. We are having, what you call, a cold war and we are anticipating another world catastrophe. These can be avoided provided we unite ourselves in the spirit in which the great Rishis of old want us to live. Then only we can spread the waves of peace that will bring an atmosphere of peace and harmony everywhere. So, Ramdas' object in going from place to place is to awaken humanity to the consciousness of God in whose light alone we can stand together as one and prevent the onrush of another war.

THE MESSAGE OF THE VEDANTA

It was thirty-three years ago that God took this child up and made him His own. From that time his one task has been to talk about God to those who are interested in the subject. We are all assembled here in a spirit of brotherhood. Of course, brotherhood is essential, but it must be based not merely upon physical co-operation but on our spiritual unity. We must feel that we are not merely bodies, but the immortal Spirit, all-pervading. Although we apparently seem to be separate from one another, essentially we are one. We have to develop this consciousness. In order to do that we must be devoted to God who is seated in

the heart of every one of us. God is not far away from us, in the temple, church or mosque. We must be devoted to Him. We must remember Him within us. By constantly remembering Him we can break the veil that separates us from Him and realise our oneness with Him. We are essentially divine, not only inwardly but outwardly also. As we are expressions of the Divine, we cannot but be divine externally also. The whole universe is described in the Bhagavad Gita as the manifestation of the Divine. Arjuna was given the vision to show that the whole universe is nothing but the manifestation of God. Every atom of this universe is filled with divine light and power. This is what we have to realise. We are one not only inwardly, but also in all aspects.

This is the message of Vedanta handed down to us from the Rishis and the great Avatars of India. The same message, you will find, has been carried throughout the length and breadth of the world by various other Teachers like Jesus Christ and Mohammed. Buddha too preached the great truth of Ahimsa and carried it through his disciples to Burma, China, Japan, Siam, &c. All these great Teachers taught us that we should live in union with each other and not fight. This message is indeed a great treasure that has been inherited by us. We are not to live like ordinary persons without trying to realise the centre and essence of our being — God. From time to time we must turn our mind from the external to the internal and try to unite our mind with the eternal Source and thereby realise that we are all one, although apparently separate or many. In unity alone there is peace. In harmony and oneness alone there is peace, not in divisions, conflicts and diversities. These must go. They can go only in the light of the experience of the great Truth dwelling within us. For that our mind has to be drawn within from time to time.

THE WAY TO STOP THE TIDE OF WAR

In the workaday world we often complain that we do not find time to think of God. But if we have a will, we can. Where there is a will there is a way. If we retire for five minutes every day to our room and feel His presence within us in meditation, we will be doing a great thing for ourselves and also for others. If we have a peaceful heart we can make others also peaceful and we can spread around us a peaceful atmosphere.

That is why we are here. It is not to create etidcord, but to create harmony and peace. In that way if we can spread goodwill and peace to all the people in the world, we will stop the tide of war completely.

LONDON,

28th September, 1954.

** With the Children of the Town and Country School,
Eton Avenue, London, N. W. 3.*

Student: Which is the most sacred animal in India?

Ramdas: Cow.

Student: Why are cows sacred?

Ramdas: Because they are the most useful animals. They give us milk, butter etc.

Student: Can you tell us something about your religion?

Ramdas: Ramdas has come to see you all the way from distant India. He is very happy to see you. You look like little flowers in the garden of God. He loves you very much. The God that he has found is in the hearts of you all. God, apart from you, is no God for him. To love you is to love God. To look at you is to look at God. If you want to see God, you must see Him in your fellow-beings. Love them and serve them. This is the true worship of God. God is not far away in heaven, but He is here with you at all times. You must pray to Him, remember Him and think of Him. By praying to Him you make your life pure and glorious. If you want to walk on the path of righteousness and truth, you should pray to Him constantly, open your heart to Him and allow His light and grace to pour into you and thus make your life divine. What more can Ramdas tell you? Ramdas has told you what he knew about God. He would wish that you should also believe in God and draw inspiration from Him by loving Him, by praying to Him and allowing His light and power to work in you so that you may grow up into true citizens not merely of London or England, but of the world.

Student: Please speak something in your own language.

Ramdas: Yes. Ramdas will recite for you one or two Sanskrit Slokas:

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।

तेषां नित्यामियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥

सर्वे धर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज ।

अहं त्वा सर्वे पापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥

Student: What is the meaning of that?

Ramdas: These are the words from the Bhagavad Gita, the great scripture of the Hindus, in which is embodied the teachings of a great incarnation of God whose name is Krishna. In the first Sloka the Lord says: 'To those people who worship Me alone, thinking of no other, to those ever harmonious I bring full security.' The second Sloka means: 'Abandoning all duties, come unto Me alone for shelter; sorrow not, I will liberate thee from all sins.'

Student (another class): Are there snakes coming into your houses in India?

Ramdas: Yes. There are snakes in India. Tigers and leopards too.

Student: That is too much for me!

Ramdas: There are jungles near the place we live in, and jackals frequently move about at nights. Sometimes leopards also come.

Student: Do elephants also come out there?

Ramdas: Yes. We see them sometimes passing in the streets.

Student: How do people get on when leopards and tigers move about?

Ramdas: They don't come into the towns. People prevent them from coming near. They are shot sometimes. But some holy men live fearlessly in caves and jungles. Leopards go near them and do no harm. Some of these holy men touch the leopards and play with them.

Student: Why don't the leopards harm them then?

Ramdas: Because these holy men love them. Once you love them, they won't harm you. You must have heard the story of St. Francis of Assisi who used to have a lion with him.

Student: What happens if we are not nice to them?

Ramdas: They try to do harm to us then. Therefore, we must be nice and kind to them, love them just as we love the dogs in our house.

Student: You can't do that with snakes, can you?

Ramdas: Yes, we can. In Ramdas' own case a snake once wound round his leg, but did him no harm. Ramdas was not afraid of it. He did not hurt it. It did not hurt him.

CHICHESTER, SUSSEX.

29th September, 1954.

With Mr. H. T. Hamblin
at Bosham House.

HEALING AND KUNDALINI

Mr. H. T. Hamblin: I met Brother Mandus. He goes about healing. He has a gift of healing. People go to him to get healed. He puts his hand on them, and many of their diseases heal. Not always successful, of course. I have seen people who were crippled with arthritis, etc. He just goes to them, holds the arm and joints, fits the dislocated part in the right place, and they get up and walk away. This sort of work he does. He gives also long lectures. I went to take the chair at two meetings of his in London. When I first went to see him he was sitting in his room with his back upright, breathing long, his eyes gazing upwards and with a heavenly glow on his face. I did not disturb him. He came to me later and seized hold of me and said, 'I have been waiting for you all these years'. We sat down in silence.

Brother Mandus and myself sat in the same chair, bold upright. I began breathing deeply and immediately I felt a tremendous spiritual force right at the bottom of the spine. I cannot describe it. Then it began to grow up, up the spine and was getting higher and higher till it went right up to my head and to the top. I happened to mention this afterwards to a friend who had read about these things. He said it was the Kundalini experience. Is it right?

Ramdas: Yes.

HTH: I know nothing about Kundalini, though I have it. When I sat with you I felt the glow of the Spirit much nicer. I felt it all round and reaching over my head. I never had such an experience before.

Ramdas: Kundalini is the divine power within us hidden in the Muladhara centre at the bottom of the spine. From there the power rises and, through the nerve called Sushumna in the backbone, it goes up from centre to centre and you get strange experiences and symptoms. There are six centres and when the Kundalini rises to each centre, the person passes through various experiences. It sometimes happens that in the company of highly evolved souls the Kundalini rises. Due to the high power developed by that person it is that you had that experience in his

company. Such an association itself is enough to awaken that power and make it rise in you. When it rises you feel a peculiar sensation. When it reaches the heart centre you get a strange joy and peace filling your entire body. When it goes to the forehead you see visions or flashes or divine forms, and peace pervades your entire body. When it reaches the top of the head known as the Sahasrara centre, you attain God-realisation. It is the union of Ishwara and Shakti, God and His power. When they are united you get illumination, that is, the realisation or vision of God. That is the science of Kundalini as described in some books on the subject. The feeling at the backbone and the sensation of something rising up are due to Kundalini only. This happens even when we are doing prayers or are in a prayerful mood. During meditation and prayer, when our body is forgotten and when we are in tune with the Divine within us, Kundalini rises and we feel a strange ecstasy in union with the Divine. This is true in the case of all spiritual aspirants and highly evolved souls. In those who have surrendered their will to the Divine will, this power is manifested. You will see their faces radiating light with a halo round their head.

TRANSMISSION OF SPIRITUAL POWER

The Divine is not far off. He is within us. Be conscious of Him and you feel His presence every minute within you. Healing power also comes to you automatically. Healing is not done purposely sometimes. By your very touch the person is healed. In the scriptures it is said that Divine power is transmitted to another in three ways — by thought, sight and touch. A saint can, by his thought, at once spiritually awaken a man. By looking into the eyes of a person he pours into him the Divine power by which he is awakened from within. The same thing is done by touch also. This very power can be used for healing diseases too of persons. The terms in Sanskrit for these three ways of spiritual transmission are Manan, Darshan and Sparshan. We have heard that Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the great saint of Bengal, touched Narendra, who was later known as Swami Vivekananda, in the chest and at once he went into a super-conscious state. He lost body consciousness and sat silent, absorbed in the Spirit. He could not easily come down from it. He was so much in the grip of that power within. Very often it

happens that when one is in a trance, he will not easily come back to the body-idea. He loses himself in that. Ramdas was having such spiritual experiences in the course of his quest. They are common to you also. It is not a new thing.

HTH: May I tell you something else?

Ramdas: Yes; do.

HTH: A woman came here twenty years ago. She came all the way from Canada. She had not much money with her. She came in a cargo boat. She entered my office. That was the hottest day of the year. She had a bandage round her neck. She sat in the office and told me what she was doing in America. She was a teacher and had also to look after a church. She had to find money for it. She had to work, and strain and struggle. It was all strain and struggle. So it went on until she became weak and was in bed. She came here led by the Spirit, of course. She told me all about her and it took about an hour. I asked a question. I had no idea of saying anything. But God took hold of my tongue. When she got to the end, I found myself saying: 'The way of the Spirit is harmony and peace'. She felt she was expanding and expanding and had the consciousness of the Infinite. She got up and said she knew why she came here. I do not think anything about healing. I just listen. I don't do anything else. It was remarkable. I think it is all the work of the one Spirit.

KINDRED SPIRITS

Ramdas: Yes, that is perfectly true. God's ways are wonderful.

Richard Whitwell: When did you leave India?

Ramdas: On the 17th of last month.

RW: You are going all round the world?

Ramdas: Yes. We have gone all over the Continent. We went to Rome, Switzerland, Germany, France, Belgium, Holland and we are here. We are going to the United States and thence to Japan and back to India via Malaya and Ceylon. God's ways are wonderful. We are meeting groups of friends all over the world. We have some questions and answers, and talks. It is going on like this.

RW: It is very wonderful.

Ramdas: We have been long ago wishing to see you both. You are so far away from us that there was no possibility of

meeting. Now God has brought us together and enabled us to talk to you in person. We are extremely happy.

RW: There is some kindred spirit between us, and the two magazines — 'The Vision' and 'The Science of Thought Review' — have some relationship.

Ramdas: Yes. Just as between us, there is some relationship between the magazines too. We have been always reading your book-reviews in the magazine. Your articles are also so inspiring and giving solace to many. Many of those who are attached to our Ashram are reading The Science of Thought Review numbers with great profit. It contains very inspiring teachings.

RW: We also pray that they may be seven times better.

HTH: Seventy-seven times better. When we are writing, God knows who is going to read, and so on.

EKTAR - ONE STRING - ONE SOUND

Ramdas: He makes you write and He makes you spread the message everywhere. There is an instrument in India; a strange instrument which has got only one string. When you play on it, it produces one sound. So all our doings have got one string and that is God. This one refrain, this one symphony, is the divine Spirit and nothing else. We live, move and have our being in Him. Only we have to know it. God has not to be brought from anywhere and made to sit in us. He is there always within us. We must only become aware of Him. If this awareness comes to us by His grace, we are perennially happy. No more thought of the morrow. All thoughts are washed away. His presence is felt every moment of our life. There is no effort there. It is effortless dwelling in God continuously for all the time.

RW: Have you enjoyed your journey? Krishna Bai too?

Ramdas: Ramdas is all right; but air travel does not much agree with Mother Krishna Bai.

ANGEL WINGS

RW: We have never been on the air yet.

Ramdas: We have been going by air all along. Somebody remarked we are using Garuda-vahan. Lord Krishna has a vehicle of a kite.

RW: Did you buy angel wings?

Ramdas: Angel wings have been converted into aeroplanes. So much time is saved by going by air. Have you a copy of our programme?

HTH: It is appalling from the human point of view.

Rāmdas: Yes. Many are wondering — Ramdas to take such a trip at this age! We want to return before the winter sets in. In spite of the cold here and in some parts of France, we are getting on well. We were in Geneva with Mr. Jean Herbert who has translated many Indian books into French. •

SPIRITUAL TEMPERATURE

RW: How is the spiritual revival in India? Is it taking place? I am sure it is.

Ramdas: Yes, there is a revival. We have been going all over India every year and have met several friends. We find there is an awakening, as it were, in the hearts of all people and they are striving to realise God. This aspiration is rising in the hearts of thousands. We go to North India and at every place thousands come and crowd round Ramdas and want to know how to realise God and what they should do for it.

RW: They want it more than the people in the West; is it so?

Ramdas: Percentage of people who want it may be more in India. There is still in the West something like an awakening. There is spiritual hunger.

RW: I think it is more underneath than manifest.

Ramdas: But it will come up. During the last one month we have been going to several places in the Continent and we had contacted several groups of spiritual aspirants and we find their hunger is very very keen.

RW: How would you compare the spiritual temperature in India to that, say, in England? In America you will recognise the tremendous difference. But you will have to wait for it.

Ramdas: Ramdas has a mind to write his impressions of his tour all over the world and publish it*. But if he mentally goes back to see what he felt during the tour in the Continent, he would say he did not at all feel anything extraordinary. He felt quite at home in all these places just as he was in India. The love which friends showered on him was equal in intensity and in its power and in its beauty. He is meeting you here and he

* The book 'World is God' has been published by Anandashram

finds the same atmosphere as he is finding in India. There is no difference. What is there to compare between the East and the West? East and West are all God's countries. God dwells everywhere. Ramdas meets Him everywhere. How can he make out which is lower and which is higher? He lives everywhere. Whether Ramdas lives in the hotel or houses of friends, he meets with nothing but love. Therefore it is difficult for him to judge and he does not very often lend himself to judging things. He feels quite at home wherever he is. Now he has come to your house and he feels quite at home; just a child has come to its own home. The friends whom we meet are so loving. They may be strangers, but for him they are so loving. When you recognise the divine Spirit in each and everybody, there is no question of comparison. That is the position.

RW: When I said that, I did not mean anything like comparing or criticising. I have no wish to get the impressions of ordinary people, but I would like some day to know your inward feeling as to what I called the temperature; whether in India it is stronger than here. But what I feel is that we all want mutual help.

Ramdas: That is why perhaps God has brought Ramdas here, in order that he may talk about God with you all. Some people ask why Ramdas is coming to Western countries. He knows that is the place to talk about God, because God is the dear object of everybody, and when we all talk together about God who is so dear, we create an atmosphere of love, peace and joy. That is why God has sent him on this travel. We thus enjoy union with Him and thereby union with others. He finds that hunger for such a union and communion is evident everywhere. To find out the temperature he was feeling the pulse and it is perfectly normal everywhere.

THREE RIVERS MERGE IN ONE

RW: When we come together

Ramdas: When we come together, just as three rivers come together and meet as one, so we may consider ourselves for the present as three rivers meeting together and becoming one. We bathe in that river. It is believed that any person, who goes and bathes in the place where the three rivers meet, is purified. So thousands go there and take their bath and consider they are perfectly purified and made holy. Verily, we must make all the

rivers meet the ocean in which all can bathe and enjoy divine bliss and peace.

RW: That one ocean is God !

Ramdas: God is the one ocean and we are all rivers. In that ocean all of us merge and become one. If we want to realise unity and harmony in the world, we must love each other on the basis of the spiritual kinship we bear to each other. That is the only relationship which is real amongst us. This is everlasting. All the relationship on the surface is of no importance. When we are united in the Spirit, there will be harmony everywhere, peace everywhere. God is our parent. We are all His children. Let us live together in perfect harmony and peace. Why should there be fights, and why should we try to do harm to each other? In expression or manifestation we appear different, but in Spirit we are one. The example is given of gold. We take a lump of gold and make various ornaments from it. The ornaments may assume different shapes, but the gold is the same in all. Spirit is the same. Though we are different forms of the Divine, we are really one.

LET US BE CHILDLIKE AND NOT CHILDISH

RW: Where such consciousness is present, war is unthinkable.

Ramdas: Ramdas is going to tell people, 'Fear not, depend upon the Spirit; war will not and shall not take place. Depend upon the power of the Spirit. Make that power reveal itself in you. Do not float on the surface. Go deep within yourself and feel you are the Spirit. God is there. Seek His guidance and He will take you on the right path so that you can live together harmoniously.' Why should we, like foolish children, fight with each other. This is most deplorable.

FOUR STAGES IN SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

HTH: May I ask a question? When you arrive at God-consciousness and realise that you are everywhere, what comes next?

Ramdas: There are four stages. Ramdas will describe them. One is that we have to see to it that by complete surrender to the Divine will, the ego is dissolved completely. Egolessness means realisation of the all-pervading Spirit or God. Then we know

that we and that Spirit are one. So long as the ego persists we are not aware of that Spirit and we do not know our identity with It. After that comes the vision of the Divine everywhere in the manifestation; the whole universe is thereafter seen as the expression of that Spirit. We see God everywhere. But there is a third stage still. In that we see the manifest and the unmanifest as the two aspects of another which is beyond both, which is unthinkable, incomprehensible and inexpressible. We can express something about the static and the dynamic aspects, that is, the aspects without form and with form, but that which is beyond both these is inexpressible, incomprehensible and ineffable. The dynamic, the static and the unthinkable all together make the supreme Godhead. He is the all-inclusive and all-transcendent Reality. Even after realising that, there is the fourth stage in which we keep up a relationship with God. It is purely personal. He is our constant companion. We can talk to Him. We can feel His presence. That is the sweetest relationship. Having had all the earlier experiences we still enjoy a close relationship with the Divine in His personal presence, and that presence Ramdas has been asked by so many to define. But it is not possible to define that. He is the impersonal-person.

INFINITE PERSONAL

RW: Or call it the Infinite Personal.

Ramdas: Yes. The Infinite is impersonal, still It is personal. You are feeling His companionship. When, several years ago, Ramdas was wandering in the Himalayas, he used to converse with Him. There was with him the Impersonal Person. He could commune with Him, he could talk to Him. Even now he does it, but very rarely. Because, He is from within, inspiring and guiding Ramdas every moment. As such he is moving and having his life, all in a state of complete freedom and ecstasy. The ecstasy abides with him twenty-four hours without effort. At one time, some effort was necessary for Ramdas, such as practising the disciplines, chanting of God's name continuously and observance of so many vows. All these were gone through by His will, and even then Ramdas was conscious that God was making him do all things. He never had known moments of depression or disappointment. If anything happened and he felt it ought not to have happened, he submitted to God's will. In that way he never had any reaction on his mind and the mind

was always dwelling in the Divine by continuous remembrance, by continuous chanting of the Divine name which his Guru gave him. He used to keep his mind ever merged in Him. This was all due to the grace of God. Ramdas never thought that it was by his own will that he did it. God had taken him in His hands and was preparing him. After He had prepared him completely, God let him go. All the Sadhana then automatically stopped and he has been a child of God and is freely moving about under His guidance and protection. He thought it fit to send Ramdas outside India. The universe is his home, and he is going from one country to another as he is going from one room to another. He does not see any difference between England and India. He meets the same Beloved everywhere. You are all forms of his Beloved. Why should he then feel himself a stranger anywhere? He is not a stranger here. He is one with you. He is your eternal companion in the Spirit.

ALL SAINTS DRAW FROM THE SAME WELL OF DIVINITY

HTH: I always feel that Indian readers understand me better than Englishmen.

Ramdas: Yes. You speak in the language of the Indians. So they understand you. Only there may be a slight difference in the terminology, but the secret of what you write is the same as what was taught to us long ago. The experience is the same.

RW: Is it not lovely to realise that it is so?

Ramdas: When we read your articles we see the underlying principle is exactly similar to what we read in Hindu scriptures. That is why people are getting so much benefit by reading your teachings.

HTH: Once a man—a scholar—wrote to me that my editorial note was pure Vedanta. I do not know what it meant. I have not heard a word of Vedanta. That is the way the Spirit works.

Ramdas: Yes. When you have that internal experience—when you have been in tune with God—when you have realised God within yourself, it is He who inspires you to write. Naturally, the saints who have realised the Truth speak in the same language, because it is the same experience for all of them and they cannot differ. Because, what comes from them is from the same supreme One. The language of God is one language. The external garb may be different, but the inner import/cannot

differ. You must have read the book, 'Cosmic Consciousness' by Richard Bucke. In it he has compared the teachings of great Teachers of the world. He shows the similarity in the teachings of Jesus, Buddha, Krishna and other God-realised souls. They signify the same thing. There is absolutely no difference. That shows the spiritual experience of all the saints in the world is the same, because they are inspired by the same Source. It is God speaking through them. Vedanta teaches us that everything is Brahman — everything is God — सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म 'Verily, all this is God'. This is the primary teaching. Realise this. Know that you are He and know everything is He. The Bhagavad Gita too speaks of the same thing. Everything that is, is God.

RW: Therefore there are not many religions, but only one religion.

Ramdas: Yes, and that is the Universal Religion.

YOU HAVE TO TRANSCEND PRAYER

HTH: We do not chant God's name here, but we have an inward prayer which we go on repeating. That amounts to the same thing. When I had to pray for things, I found I had only to thank Him. I went on saying, 'Thank Thee! Thank Thee!' That became a practice and I found that there was a glow in the heart. That is one way.

Ramdas: In the Ashram we repeat God's name and go about doing our work. We must transcend the stage of prayer also. Because, utter dependence on God does not admit of any prayer. We live and move in Him. Then why pray to Him? We are completely under His protection and we are aware of it. A child has nothing to pray to its mother when the mother looks after it. The mother knows what is good for the child. We had read a poem, the heading of which was, 'Unanswered Prayers'. The author says, "O God! Do not grant my prayers. In my foolishness I may ask for so many things which are not good for me. Give me only what is best for me." This stage also must pass. We need not pray. We are perfectly confident that He is doing everything for our good. In whatever way He makes us live, we must reconcile ourselves to it, taking it that God has done these things for our good only.

Good and bad are mental attitudes. In the Absolute, that is, in God, there is no evil. We reconcile ourselves to everything that happens in our life taking them as given to us by God. He

is all goodness and mercy. From Him evil cannot come. Evil is man's own making. Man takes certain situations as evil and suffers. Certain other situations he considers as good and is happy. If we go beyond these dualities, then good and evil have no meaning for us. The same is the case with the so-called loss and gain, success and failure, praise and blame. These terms have no significance for us because we enjoy internal bliss, which is eternal. Why do we care whether the world praises us or not? But the man who clings on to these worldly things wants honour and praise; when he gets them he is happy and when he does not, he is unhappy. His life is like a pendulum moving betwixt a smile and a tear. Suffering is necessary for spiritual growth just as manure is to the plants. Sufferings will later on be transmuted into joy.

KINGS ENVIED RAMDAS' HAPPINESS

Ramdas never felt discomforts as such. He took everything to be for his good and he was perfectly happy. God's grace was pouring on him continuously and there was no time for him to think of any situation as causing sorrow and therefore he was perfectly blissful. At that time he found out that it was not any external situation that made us happy or unhappy, but our state of mind. The poor man in the hut remembers God and is very happy. He is satisfied with what God gives him and is perfectly happy, living a simple and quiet life. Millionaires are often the most miserable ones. There is an English saying, 'Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown'. The man who is feeling the presence of God within him and dwells in the Spirit alone is the happiest man. When Ramdas was going from place to place, he was a veritable mendicant — such ones are allowed in India to go about freely — and whenever he felt hungry, he would ask for alms which some one would give him. He would then go into solitude and think of God always. At that time he had nothing with him for personal comforts. Still he was in a state of divine ecstasy. People were wondering how he could afford to smile under such circumstances. He had to lie down on road sides. But kings and millionaires envied him for his happiness. They could not dream of it. We can never be unhappy in any situation when we have found the divine peace and bliss within us by constant tuning of our mind with God. Nothing can affect us. Nothing can disturb our inward peace. Therefore, Ramdas says,

"Why are you running after these bubble-like pleasures of the world? Live with bare necessities, but remember God and feel His presence with you. Tune your mind to the Divine existence and be happy, living an honest and truthful life. That will grant you a harvest of peace."

This is carrying coals to Newcastle. Still Ramdas is talking to you because he cannot contain himself. He is simply pouring himself out. He is telling you just like a child telling its mother its experiences. He talks only in that spirit, and not in a spirit of teaching.

HEAVENLY FOOD AND DRINK

HTH: The peace of God transcends happiness.

Ramdas: Yes. Peace is deeper.

HTH: What the world calls happiness is transitory. Real happiness is something higher than that. That is peace of God and that takes in everything. That is better than happiness, is it not?

RW: That is what Christ called Joy, is it not? — the heavenly food and the heavenly drink!

HTH: We are going to have some food and drink in a minute.

Ramdas: That is also heavenly. God is everything. The food is also He. The Upanishad says: अन्नं च ब्रह्म 'Food also is God'. This vision transcends all relative terms. To talk of God means to live in Eternity. That is why we are bubbling with joy.

LONDON,

30th September, 1954.

- *Speech at 'The Open Way' of Dr. Graham Howe,
14 A, Upper Wimpole Street, London, W. 1.*

OBJECT OF DEVOTION

Beloved Friends,—Ramdas is a child of God. He introduces himself to you as such. He finds himself in your midst and is extremely happy. He has been asked to speak on 'The Object of Devotion.' He is not in the habit of delivering lectures. So when he was told that he was to deliver a lecture today, he was a bit surprised. He gives only small talks and when questions are put to him he tries to answer them, solving the various problems placed before him. This was what was done in all the places he visited on the Continent. He addressed small groups answering the questions put to him, and now you have asked him to speak on 'The Object of Devotion.' The object of devotion is naturally God.

God is very dear to us because He dwells in our heart and our object in life is to realise Him, to know Him, to see Him, to feel Him and to have Him always with us. This is the object of life. Very often we miss this object. We are after so many things of the world which make us forget God. What we have to do is to remember Him constantly and do such things as will enable us to remember Him. Our life must be lived in such a way that we can be in constant communion with God.

NATURE OF DEVOTION IS LOVE

The nature of devotion, as described by one of the great saints of India, is supreme love. If we have real devotion for God, our hearts will be full of that supreme love for Him. Such love is by itself sufficient to make us realise God. No other spiritual discipline is necessary to keep our minds away from the worldly pleasures, than to saturate our minds with love of God. This is the positive way. This is what is called the Open Way. Because, when you have intense love for God, you will remember Him constantly. Just as when you bring light in a room, darkness automatically disappears, so when love for God fills your

heart, all desires for the transitory objects of life leave you. This is the result of having devotion for God. For it is said that devotion or love for God is self-sufficient.

REMEMBRANCE FOSTERS LOVE

Devotees therefore say: "I want love for you, O God! I want your remembrance, I do not want anything else." Continuous remembrance of God is the way by which we can develop love for Him and be conscious of His existence within us and everywhere about us. God is not far away from us. We need not go in search of Him to temples, churches or to places of pilgrimage. He is ever dwelling within us. Forgetfulness makes us feel that we are not in His presence and that we do not have Him with us. A child, when it misses the mother, is restless. When the mother is near, it is happy and cheerful. So it is that through forgetfulness we miss the Divine who is always with us. As Ramdas has already said, the easiest way to feel His presence is to remember Him constantly. This child of God was made to repeat God's name continuously, ceaselessly. By such repetition he had an unbroken stream of divine consciousness within him and that enabled him to feel His presence always. When you feel His presence, you find real happiness and peace. Devotion should be for the sake of realising Him and not for acquiring the things of the world.

FOUR KINDS OF DEVOTEES

The Bhagavad Gita, the great scripture of the Hindus, describes four kinds of devotees. Sri Krishna says:

चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनोऽर्जुन ।

आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ ॥

'Four kinds of virtuous men worship Me, O Arjuna, the distressed, the seeker of knowledge, the seeker of wealth, and the wise, O Lord of the Bharatas.' The first is the Aarta, one in distress. He prays to God to be cured of some disease. By His grace he gets rid of the disease as a result of the prayer. The second kind of devotee is the Jijnasu or seeker of Truth. He wants nothing but Jnana or Self-knowledge. He wants realisation of God, and does not pray for any material benefits. The third is the Artharthi, who prays for wealth, progeny, name, fame and

other material benefits. The fourth kind of devotee is the Jnani. His is the devotion that comes after gaining Jnana, after seeing or realising God. Even after realising oneness with Him, he still remains devoted to Him. He is the Jnani-Bhakta. This is considered to be the highest kind of devotion.

When our heart entirely goes to Him and is full of joy and peace, our remembrance of Him becomes constant, and through such remembrance we ultimately realise our identity with Him. We want to continue to love Him. For that purpose we assume a separate relationship with Him and take ourselves to be different from Him. We then love Him as a child loves its mother or a servant his master.

VALUE OF SATSANG

Ramdas had the grace of God thirty-three years ago, which changed his life entirely. It was a wonderful transformation. It is by His grace that you get aspiration to attain God, and thereafter develop a longing for the contact of a saint. The saint's contact crowns the spiritual experience with success. In the early stages the struggle is very keen, but when you get the contact of a divine personality, your progress becomes unimpeded. You rush towards the Divine without any obstruction, because the grace received from the saint helps you all through. It is wonderful to have the contact of a saint. It is very difficult to get it, but when you once have it, you may depend upon it, you are saved. Without it nobody can find the path and reach the divine goal of Self-realisation. It has been held out as of the first importance by all saints of the world. A soul alone can kindle another soul, not books. You may read any number of books. They may be helpful to you intellectually. But if you want to walk on the divine path, to have the needed courage, the strength, the initiative, the contact of a saint is absolutely necessary.

Shankaracharya, a great saint who lived several hundred years ago in India and who is considered to be a philosopher of a very high level, has said:

सत्संगत्वे निःसंगत्वं निःसंगत्वे निर्मोहत्वम् ।

निर्मोहत्वे निश्चलतत्त्वं निश्चलतत्त्वे जीवन्मुक्तिः ॥

Ramdas is not a scholar in Sanskrit. He knows only a few Slokas. The meaning of this Sloka is that the contact of saintly souls detaches our mind from the world and attaches it to the Divine,

the inner Spirit within us. Our mind at once changes its direction from the world to God. A person who never longed for God begins to long for Him by the contact of a saint. The devotee is like the honey bee which is utterly indifferent to the world when it drinks honey from the flower. His mind is continuously thinking and meditating on God, as a result of which it becomes perfectly still. Stillness of the mind itself is Self-realisation. So long as our mind is restless, we cannot realise that supreme Truth dwelling within us. The moment the mind becomes still we feel the presence of the Divine with us. So the whole struggle is to control the mind. Constant remembrance and one-pointed devotion to God is the only way by which we can still the mind which is so fickle. We cannot control the mind easily. By loving God with all our heart through the company of a saint, we shall be able to fill ourselves with His radiance, with His joy, peace and love. There will be no scope for any other desire to cause restlessness of the mind.

THE EASIEST WAY

There are various paths prescribed by various Yogis and saints of different parts of the world. But Ramdas found that the easiest is the path of devotion. You have a relationship with God in the first instance. You take Him as mother and yourself as child, or you take Him as master and yourself as servant. In this relationship you think of Him constantly, love Him with all your heart, dedicate all your actions to Him, and thus open yourself for His grace to entirely transform you. Now He reveals Himself in all His fullness and splendour within you until at last you realise that you and He are not different. You become the very embodiment of the Divine, because you become the mould in which God pours Himself, and you are transformed completely inwardly and outwardly. The whole life becomes utterly divine. This is the goal to which devotion to God takes you.

Ramdas had no other discipline when he was walking on the path of God-realisation. He found the name of God most helpful. Many people ask what the name of God can do. But those who know the power of the Name can tell you what wonderful potency there is in the Name. Ramdas never found any other method so easy as that. He tried so many other methods; but the mind was very very difficult to control; whereas by the repetition of God's name the mind was controlled very easily. To repeat God's name

is to think and remember Him, and as you remember Him, the Divine hidden within you manifests and fills you through and through.

THE POSITIVE WAY

This is the positive way. It is not that you have to purify your mind and later realise the Truth. You must bring out God from within your heart and make Him permeate every part of your being. You eliminate everything that is undivine in you automatically. It is just like light making darkness vanish. That is why the name of God is so sweet. Ramdas is travelling from place to place with the sole object of extolling the glory of the Divine name. For a person who is on the path of devotion, Name is the only way to keep up a continuous stream of God-remembrance. When you tune your thought with God, you realise that God alone is real and everything else is false. To say that everything else is false does not mean that the whole world is an illusion. It only means that the diversity you see before you is false. There is unity behind the diversity. Now you behold the whole universe as the Divine. In this vision diversity is found to be false and unity the Truth.

THREE STEPS

There are three steps by which we realise the fullness of divine existence or divine being. Firstly we have to be devoted to God looking upon Him as our father, mother, friend or master, and be thinking of Him constantly. By so remembering Him and devoting ourselves to Him, our mind becomes pure, free from low sense-desires, and a dispassion is developed towards earthly objects. The result is that the mind is constantly attuned to the Divine and this leads to our identity with the Divine through meditation, by rising above the body-idea. This brings you Jnana or knowledge of the Self in which there is no duality. We realise that God and we are one. As Jesus had said, 'I and my Father are one'.

In the super-conscious state we are one with God. To realise this Truth is the object of our life. Only in the physical and mental planes we seem to be different from Him. When we rise beyond these two, and dwell in the super-conscious through complete and wholehearted devotion to Him, we realise we and He are one.

There is still another step higher than this. We realise God not merely as the still, calm, all-pervading Spirit, but also as the entire universe of names and forms. This, in Hindu terminology, is called Para Bhakti. Bhakti is the root, dispassion is the tree, Jnana is the flower and Para Bhakti is the fruit. It is a very sweet fruit. When we have the vision of the Reality everywhere, our life is pervaded with sweetness. In fact, in all our actions there is nothing but sweetness. To see is sweetness, to hear is sweetness, to move and do everything is to enjoy sweetness. Sweetness fills every pore of our being. When thus our life is sweetened with divine love, power and glory, our eyes see everywhere nothing but the Divine. We do not see the world as different from us. We see ourselves as the whole world. Just as we look into the mirror and see our own reflection in it, so we see the whole universe as the reflection of our Atman or the Truth we realise in Jnana. The supreme Self or Atman reveals Itself as the universe.

Swami Vivekananda has given a fine description of Para Bhakti in his book 'Bhakti Yoga'. In the state of Para Bhakti the devotee looks upon the whole universe as the very form of the Divine. This is also spoken of in the Bhagavad Gita in the 11th Chapter, which gives a description of the Vishwarupa Darshan. Lord Krishna showed His universal form to Arjuna in the battlefield. Seeing the cosmic Vision, Arjuna wondered how sublime and terrible it was. But he could not stand it. He was so much upset that he wanted to have the sweet vision of Lord Krishna in His beautiful Avataric form, with four arms, disc and crown.

The Universal Vision is what we have to achieve. It can be attained through the power of our devotion to God. Devotion is the basis of our life. Just as food is required for the body, devotion is required for the soul. If we have no devotion in our heart, our soul is starved out. It has no peace, no joy and no contentment. We are craving and ever craving for things in the world and are never satisfied. It is like pouring oil or ghee into the fire in order to put it out. We cannot put out fire that way. If we wish to destroy the burning fires in our heart, we must cultivate love for God. We must fill our heart with devotion for Him and remember Him constantly. Constant remembrance can come to us only when we have the grace of God. As soon as saints bless us, our mind is turned to Him. Divine grace comes to us through saints. His name is sweeter than nectar.

Ramdas is not telling you anything new, because you are all on the Godward path and you have found what it is to be in tune with God. You know, in union with Him alone we find real peace and real joy, otherwise not. In this world of change, and with our mind ever changing, we do not find any peace except in God. How to find Him? By loving Him with all our heart, by remembering Him constantly. After Ramdas got the Name, for one year he did not know what meditation was and what severe austerities were. His Guru gave him God's name and he went on repeating it with all faith and he got ineffable peace and joy. His entire physical frame was saturated with ecstasy. The root of devotion is in the Name.

LOVE AND REMEMBRANCE GO TOGETHER

If we really love God, we cannot but remember Him. How can we forget Him when we have intense love for Him? How can the child forget the mother? We forget God because our love for worldly things is greater than our love for Him. Where our love is, there our mind is. A miser is always thinking of wealth as he has great love for wealth. So if we give all the love of our heart for God, automatically we shall remember Him. We do not have to take any lessons for it. We need not undergo any special course for it. The only thing required is that we must love Him with all our heart. Then alone we shall remember Him constantly. That remembrance will purify us because when remembrance is there, God's light is there and that light purifies us. Our mind will then become absolutely pure and innocent like a child's. Such are dear to God. Therefore Jesus has said: 'Until you become like children, you cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven.' In Heaven God dwells. To be conscious of the Kingdom within, we must be childlike in nature. We are not childlike, but are childish. We must not be foolish children of God; we must be His wise children who have known Him and have seen Him. Then we can talk to Him, have Him always with us, for all the twenty-four hours of the day. We can live, move and have our being in Him and realise our union with Him. After we are once established in this union with Him, there is nothing for us to achieve. Thereafter we always bask in His grace and presence.

This is the supreme state we can attain by devotion. People think that by wealth, name and glory, they can be happy.

But they find no contentment, no rest and no peace. The moment you turn your mind towards God, even for a few minutes, you will feel His presence and you will then know how much peace you get — the peace that passeth all understanding. The peace within you is made manifest. Sit by yourself silently, with your mind still, offering yourself completely to Him in a spirit of surrender, and then you will immediately feel His presence. If you practise this for some time you will realise His presence at all times.° You will always live in Light and there will be no darkness for you.

NAME TAKES YOU TO THE HIGHEST SPIRITUAL PEAK

Many forces will martial against you when you are on the Godward path. But they cannot stand before the power and glory of God. As soon as God's power is manifested, they are put down. If you bring into your mind the greatness of God, all your littleness will disappear. Think of Him as the almighty and your weakness will disappear. Think of Him as all bliss, and your misery will disappear. Think of Him as supreme light and the darkness of your heart will disappear. This is the positive way of approach. You are not to start from the bottom and struggle upwards. You begin from above. You hold on to Him first and everything else is done. Seek His grace by constant prayer, by constant communion and meditation. Then you will find a wonderful change taking place within you. The desires, which you were battling with to conquer, will be easily subdued, not by the use of your strength, but by the power of God. By remembering Him you draw from Him the necessary strength to overcome all the desires which have overpowered you. God's power will grant you the awareness of and union with Him, and the vision of God in the universe. God's name will take you to the highest peak of Realisation.

Great saints performed many hard and severe austerities in order to attain Him, but in the last stage of their life they came to the conclusion that the Divine name is the only means of liberation. Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the great sage of Dakshineshwar, who had for twelve years performed various kinds of Tapasya, told his devotees to take the holy name of God. Mother Sarada Devi also told the aspirants who came to her to take the holy name of God. What more can we do? Let us remember God, cry to Him just like a child that cries to its

mother till she grants what it wants. When the all-merciful God is capable of giving us everything that we ask for, why should we not approach Him with all the love and trust of a child? Ramdas is such a child come to you to talk about Him, because He is dear to him and so also to you all. To talk about God is pure joy and happiness.

Ramdas is not given to teaching. But he is giving out his own experiences in the light of which you may reap some benefit. He is touring by God's command. He has been doing so in India for several years from the time God acknowledged him as His son. Now it is His will that he should go from India to other countries also and talk to small groups like yours so that he can share with you his joy. In joy eternal we feel one with everybody. Physically we seem to be separate, but as the immortal Spirit we are essentially one. It is in this unity we get real joy.

THE TRUE BASIS OF WORLD-UNITY

The world is in a state of discord and dissension because it is not led by the Spirit. People have not gone deep down within themselves to find the true basis of world-unity. They are groping on the surface and therefore cannot find unity. They are working only on the intellectual plane by which they think they can achieve harmony. But they cannot. On that plane, differences will remain as they are, so also discord.

When Ramdas was about to leave India on the world tour, he asked Ram — God — what was the purpose of His sending this child over the world. Ram said it was to spread the message of universal love and service, to talk to the people about the universal Spirit. By the knowledge of the universal Spirit alone you get universal vision, and then universal love and service will automatically follow. We must all love one another. Jesus says, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself.' Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita says, 'I am dwelling in all beings and creatures. If you truly love Me, love Me in all beings and creatures.' Buddha, the great Teacher of India who came long before Christ, holds forth the great principle of giving love for hate. He says, 'It is not that you should treat with indifference the person who hates you, but you must love him in return.' Once, when Buddha was going from place to place, preaching his message of righteousness, he met a critic who abused him. Buddha smiled serenely when he heard the words of insult, and after some time, when the critic

had exhausted his vocabulary of abusive words, said, "Brother, I am not at all angry with you. Suppose you offer me an apple and I do not accept it, where will it go?" "It will come back to me," answered the critic. "Then, let me tell you, I have not received your abuses at all," said Buddha. The critic who was abusing him, now fell at his feet. If Buddha had received the abuses he would have felt bad about the man. But by this way of love, Buddha transformed him altogether.

LOVE UNIFIES

Love is a great unifier. Love is a solvent that dissolves all diversity and produces unity. But to love truly we must have the knowledge of the Self, for on the basis of this knowledge alone we can love all. By Self is meant the universal Self, not the individual self. The same Self that is in me is in you also. So you and I are not essentially different. If I do any injury to you, I do injury only to myself. Thus when we know that the Self pervades everywhere and that all of us are manifestations of the one Self, we cannot but love one another. Then there will be harmony in this world. But the world politicians and statesmen do not want to think that way. They want to have various international conferences, leagues and meetings to bring about peace in the world, but nothing good has come out of such efforts.

So what should one do to realise God? He should dedicate all his actions to Him, be always in tune with Him by constant remembrance and meditation. If you realise Him, you can make others also realise Him. You will share with others the bliss and peace you enjoy. When they too realise Him, you will see a growing feeling of universal brotherhood by which all differences among people will be dissolved and unity and harmony will prevail. You will thus produce a harmonious atmosphere all over the world.

So we should try our best to stem the tide of another war by releasing the force of the Spirit. It is quite possible to achieve this. Out of millions, even if a hundred or two can develop the soul power through love for all beings, they can stop the coming of the world war, because spiritual force any day is greater than material force. Even one man can work wonders by the spiritual force he develops. When hundreds join together for the great task, how can war take place? Many friends ask Ramdas if

another world war will break out. Ramdas says it will not. Let us all firmly believe so and set free a peace wave to spread all over the world and touch the hearts of all human beings, and thereby create an atmosphere of harmony and goodwill. Even those, who are responsible for war mentally, will have their hearts changed. Ignorance is the cause of all quarrel and strife in the world. Ignorance is not a crime. It does not deserve to be condemned, but it has to be removed. And by the power of your love you can remove ignorance. If your heart is pure, from it will flow out love which can transform the worst of men into the best of men. One, who is trying to harm others through lust for power, will be disarmed of his evil intentions and his heart will become pure and humble.

This is how, by the contact of saints, many people become good. We must become spiritual batteries giving peace and joy to everybody. All of us have in us the all-powerful Divine. If only we are conscious of Him and manifest His glory, then we can exercise that benign influence upon others. The power of the Soul — God — is wonderful. We cannot adequately describe His greatness. When Ramdas tries to express the inexpressible, he is struggling for words. It is said that God can be only experienced and not described. When we have Him, we live in perennial joy and pour it out everywhere. By sacrificing ourselves for others, we find much more joy than by living a life of selfishness. The greatness of saints is fully revealed when they undergo persecution. We know that prominent saints of the world were subjected to persecution. As they were passing through the ordeal, their divine powers became more and more manifest. As a great Poet says, 'Lives of great men may be compared to leaves of aromatic plants. If you simply hold the leaves in your hand, they do not give out any fragrance. So it is with great souls. Through suffering they do immense good to humanity'.

Dr. Graham Howe: If you kindly chant for us God's name, it will be very fine.

(Ramnam was then sung for a few minutes and the meeting came to a close.)

LONDON,
1st October, 1954.

Place: 10, Egerton Terrace,
London, S. W. 3.

*Talks with Monsieur F. Schuon (Sufi Master, H. Q. 40 Chemin
De Rochetta.2, Pully, Lausanne, Switzerland.)*

"WE ARE HINDUS IN SUFI FORM"

Monsieur Schuon: It is joy to meet in the name of God.

Ramdas: Since we heard about you in Geneva, we have been longing to see you and we are happy to meet you here. In Geneva, your disciples spoke about your coming to London at this time and it is a happy coincidence that we are also here now and we could meet.

M. S: You gave blessings to all our friends in Switzerland and here.

Ramdas: It was a joy to meet them.

M. S: May be, we come to you tomorrow morning.

Ramdas: We shall be so happy if you can come. We are leaving England the day after tomorrow.

M. S: We all love very much the Hindu way of approach. But we had a Muslim Guru, who was a Sufi, and therefore we are Sufies. But at heart we are like Hindus—Hindus in the Sufi form. We like Sri Shankara, Ramanuja, Ramakrishna and all Hindu saints. All my life I had hoped to have Satsang and to know Hindu saints. But I could never meet a Hindu saint so far. We have been in Bombay for two days only. Now, through God's will, I have the joy to make contact with a Hindu saint. It is, indeed, a great pleasure for us.

Ramdas: We have heard also so much about Sufism. We have some friends in Bombay who are Sufis. Formerly they were in Pakistan. We find there is no difference between the Bhakti path of the Hindus and the path of the Sufis.

M. S: There are many ways of approach to God, to suit peoples of different temperaments. So, the forms may be different, but the inner side of spirituality is the same, as one Truth alone is.

Ramdas: You may kindly sing the name of God. We would like to hear you. A Sufi friend in Geneva sang the name of God. So you can just sing together and we will be so happy.

M. S: We know only Arabic.

Ramdas: God's name is sweet whether it is Arabic or any other language.

• HEART WITH GOD AND HANDS AT WORK

A Sufi Devotee: When we were with you, you were speaking about women who were carrying water on their heads and although they could talk and laugh, still their attention was always on the pots. You compared this attention of theirs with the attention we should have on God when we are working in the world. This is a very difficult thing to acquire, and people very often become discouraged because they do not achieve this concentration on God when they are doing worldly duties. What advice do you give them? For us, we live a very busy life and so it is all the more difficult.

Ramdas: We are not working all the twenty-four hours. We might be working eight to ten hours at the most. We have the rest of the time at our disposal. When we are free from work we can concentrate upon God who is within us, by chanting His name. If we practise this every day, even say, for fifteen minutes, with great devotion, then at other times also we shall have a current of divine remembrance running through us spontaneously. Even when we are active in the world our mind will be in tune with God, and the name of God will be ringing in our heart automatically without any effort. This is quite possible. Great saints carried on their worldly activities even after they realised God.

Kabir was one such saint. He was a great Sufi saint of India. He was a weaver by caste. Even when he was working the loom, his mind was in tune with God through the chanting of God's name. He was saying, "I am not working the loom. It is God who is working the loom." His mind was so absorbed in God that he thought it was God who did everything, and when the work was over and the cloth was removed from the loom, he would say it was woven by God. There was a potter saint who was preparing pots. His mind was absorbed in God, and he was feeling God was making the pots. The power that is active in us is God's power. It is God's will that works. If we surrender ourselves to Him by constantly remembering Him through the power of the Name, then we shall feel we are not doing anything by ourselves, but the divine power in us does everything. In this

state if we do any work, it will not be done from the individualistic or egoistic standpoint, but from the universal standpoint. Because, it is the universal power that is active in us and makes us talk, walk and do everything. This is a state of complete surrender which we attain through constant remembrance of God by the repetition of His name.

In Sanskrit the word for remembrance is Smaran. Smaran is the easiest way of approach to God. The moment you take His name, you become aware of Him. The tongue and the mind must always be repeating His name and be thinking of Him. It is said that the remembrance of God must be so continuous and unbroken that it should be like a stream of oil poured from one vessel to another.

During your off hours or leisure moments you have to practise the repetition of God's name for one or two years. Then the mind gets so used to the remembrance of God's name that it will naturally go on remembering Him even when we are active, and it will get absorbed in divine consciousness. As those women who were carrying water pots on their heads were talking and telling stories to each other, while their attention on their pots was not lost, we can also do work in the world keeping our mind centred in God. In such work there will be no question of selfishness and consequent suffering and pain to others. The heart will be filled with love which flows out and expresses itself in action for the good of humanity. That action is true service of God. Our work will be a form of worship because we are conscious that it is done by divine will and power. Divine will alone is supreme. This we realise only by constantly remembering Him and keeping down the ego which makes us think that we are acting.

LOVE BRINGS REMEMBRANCE

Sufi Devotee: You said that if one takes the name of God for a little time during one's leisure, one will have a current of the Name running while working. But it is difficult for Europeans to do. They cannot even begin to call on the Name for quarter of an hour with concentration. They will do so for one minute and for fourteen minutes they will think of something quite different and forget all about the Name.

Ramdas: That is because the aspiration for God is not so very intense as is necessary. Our love for other things is greater.

Therefore it is said that *ananya chintan* — one-pointed thought or remembrance of God beyond everything else — is required. This can be possible only when our love for God is greater than for any other object in the world. Then the mind will not run here and there.* We must pray in all humility to Him, "O God, give me one-pointed devotion for You. I can remember You only when I have love for You. My love is not strong enough. Make it stronger so that my mind may be always fixed on You. Let Your name ring in my tongue continuously." We can get such love from contact of saints and great Teachers of the world. God's grace flows into us through saints. It does not fall from the heavens. Saints are the vehicles through whom grace descends from God on us. Whenever your mind is uncontrollable, go and have the company of a saint. At once your mind will turn to God. This was Ramdas' experience, when he was trying to concentrate his mind on God. Whenever he was in the company of saints, without effort his mind was repeating God's name. So we must contact saintly souls, serve them, hear their advice given for our uplift, and try to follow them. In their company we taste the sweetness of the Name. When once the mind tastes this sweetness, it will cease to wander here and there.

NAME IS NECTAR

We have got so many desires for worldly pleasures which are inconstant and transitory. Mind becomes restless because of these attractions. So we must have dispassion towards worldly pleasures and have love for the divine Name. There is a song by Kabir, 'Rama Kahanaka Maja'. The meaning of it is, 'He who has got the sweetness of the Name on the tongue is a liberated soul.' In fact, the Name is sweeter than nectar, but we do not get the sweetness of it because we have no love for the bearer of the Name — God. A man who has a certain fever is given some sugar to eat. He says that it tastes bitter and throws it away. When he gets well, you again give him sugar; then he says it is sweet. Sugar is always sweet. It does not taste sweet to him when he is sick. So the Name is always sweet. We do not find it sweet because our mind is diseased. What is the disease? The desire for the objects of the senses. Pray God to give you one-pointed devotion to Him. God is immortal bliss and peace. So His name is made up of bliss and peace. As soon as the Name is

taken, it is revealed as bliss and peace, because God and His name are not different.

GOD IS NAME AND NAME IS GOD

God is Name and Name is God. In that spirit let us remember the Name. The moment you take the Name, at once sweetness starts. Ramdas may refer to the example of lozenges. If you put it in your mouth, at once sweetness starts. It does not take time to give you sweetness. The moment you take the Name, your entire body is permeated with joy. You are in tune with Him in such a way that you lose your individual sense. You are filled with divine ecstasy. This is what the Name gives you, if you repeat it with all love and devotion. The disease of the mind can be cured by the divine Master alone. His grace alone can cure your malady. Once you are cured of it, you taste the sweetness of the Name. This joy is incomparable; the joy you get from the objects of the senses is nothing. The joy the Name gives you is eternal. This joy is the sun and the worldly joy is like the glow-worm. The glow-worm shines in darkness, but when the sun rises the glow-worm is nowhere. So when you experience the divine joy, as you tune your mind with God, all the joys of the world pale into insignificance. Will a man who always drinks nectar, go and drink gutter water? No, he will never do it. This eternal nectar is God within us, and if we surrender ourselves to Him by taking His name, He will grant us the vision of seeing Him as the whole universe. Then we will have no hate, no enmity or dislike for anybody. Our life expresses itself as universal love and peace. Then we are really blessed.

NAME IS KALPATARU—WISH-FULFILLING TREE

This is the glorious summit of spiritual experience that can be attained by the repetition of God's name which is so simple but so powerful. Name can take you to the highest pinnacle of God-realisation. We have only to take refuge in the Name with all faith and devotion. Pray to God for nothing else but for granting you the sweetness of the Name. The Name is the giver of everything. In the Hindu scriptures, there is mention of the Kalpataru—wish-yielding tree. You sit below this tree and wish for anything. You will at once have your wish fulfilled. The Name is a Kalpataru. You repeat the Name and whatever you wish for,

you will get. But do not ask for anything else but the highest realisation of the Divine. Why ask for earthly things when you can get the eternal verities of life? Ask for God-realisation, and the Name will give you that. So glorious and so powerful is the Name!

Ramdas is going from place to place only to speak about the glory of the Name. If humanity only believes in the glory of the Name, there will be no war. There will be perfect harmony and peace in the world, if God, by His grace, plants His name in the hearts of all human beings on the earth. War should never take place. This must be our firm conviction, because the power of the Name we chant is so invincible.

FUSION OF WISDOM, LOVE AND ACTION

M. S: Wonderful! Europeans very often have lack of faith. They invoke the name of God and they feel nothing. They forget one thing and that is confidence in God. They are full of doubts, sorrow and fear. Europeans think too much. They must learn to have confidence in God. They invoke very much, but surrender to Him is lacking.

Ramdas: Like a child one must surrender to God. Then one attains peace and happiness. Childlike surrender is necessary. Intellectual gymnastics should be given up. Ramdas found in Europe people are thinking too much, but not feeling as much as they think. We must open our heart. They say compassion in the heart is weakness and dry intellectualism is strength. Wars are taking place because we make use of only reason, bereft of the loving influence of emotion. Love has been thrust into the background at present. Devotion of the heart and wisdom of the head must meet. In other words, we must have an illumined intellect and a purified heart. Then will flow out pure, blissful and spontaneous action. This is what is mentioned also in the Bhagavad Gita, the great scripture of the Hindus. Bhakti, Jnana and Karma are synchronised. Bhakti means devotion, Jnana means knowledge and Karma means action. Knowledge is of the head, devotion is of the heart and action is of the body. They must all be purified and worked in harmony with one another. This can be done when God is revealed in us. We must invoke God to manifest Himself in our heart. God is not only wisdom, but love; not only wisdom and love, but He is also the Master of action. His power is supreme. Mind is filled with the light of

eternal wisdom, the light of His knowledge, heart is the repository of infinite love, and body is actuated by almighty power. This is Yoga or union with God by a fusion of the three powers of our being — mental, emotional and physical.

REASON VERSUS INTUITION

M. S: There is a great difference between the philosophy which comes from the head of man and the old traditional Hindu wisdom like that of Sri Shankara which does not come from the human source but from God. So, modern philosophies are different. European philosophy comes only from the head and the human faculty. It does not come from the Divine. It ends in the human plane.

Ramdas: They call it psycho-analysis. Ramdas has heard about it. All these things are in the mental plane. The divine plane is entirely different. When God works in us, He works unerringly. He fills our mind, senses, heart and body with His light and power. This is the real thing. The great philosophers of the world, either of the East or of the West, used to draw inspiration from Him and do things. But the present day philosophers who try to understand everything by their reasoning faculty, jump into dubious conclusions. These are not always correct.

Truth is a matter of experience or intuition, which is different from mere reasoning powers or logic. Reason can take us only up to a certain stage or plane and not beyond that. In the absence of intuition, reason may be all right. But some people have not even reason to guide them. Mind is their guide and they are always bungling. They are doing things without caring for any baneful consequence, and they suffer. Sometimes even intellect fails you in affording correct guidance. Intellect is rightly considered to be like a pair of tongs by holding which you can take anything, but cannot catch your own hand that holds it. So also the intellect, which is worked by a higher power, cannot understand what that power is. Therefore, reasoned out conclusions are anything but perfect.

Modern philosophy begins always with doubt about God and His existence. The ancient wisdom begins with certainty. Modern philosophy turns round in circles without getting anywhere. Europeans do not contemplate with a pure intellect, which is called enlightened Buddhi.

M. S: You have given today a great feast for us!

Ramdas: We are also enjoying your company. It is glorious to meet so many of you who are all votaries of the Name. We are enjoying the bliss derived from the Name. Name makes one perfectly happy. We can at once know from the face of a person whether he is a votary of the Name or not. If he is, his face is lustrous with divine light and joy. He is free from all worries and doubts.

THE REAL 'I' IS ATMA

We generally say 'my' intellect, 'my' mind or 'my' body. That shows I am not the intellect, mind or body, but am the possessor of all these things. In the course of our talk we usually say 'my' body is ill, 'my' body is affected. But when the body gets a sudden hit or some pain, we say, 'I got pain'. That does not agree with the idea that we are not the body. If I say 'my coat', I am not the coat. Similarly I am not the body, but only the possessor of the body, just as I am only the wearer of the coat. If you think in these lines, you will know who you really are.

M. S: The Atma.

Ramdas: So it follows that when the body dies, I do not die. Who am I then? I am the undying 'I'.

M. S: Sat-Chit-Ananda! Man takes a rope for the snake. Every man is the Truth, but he does not know it.

Ramdas: That is why it is said ignorance is the cause of all misery and pain. We think we are the body and therefore we are unhappy. If we know we are the supreme Spirit, the eternal Atman, we shall be free from the bondage of ignorance and enjoy eternal happiness. It does not mean that even now we are not that. But we do not know that. It is only ignorance that makes us think that we are individuals. But when knowledge dawns we shall be awakened to the consciousness of the divine existence. We have nothing new to attain. We have only to become aware of what we really are. For instance, suppose some particle of dust falls into our eyes. We feel great discomfort. We go to the doctor and explain to him that there is some irritation felt in the eyes. The doctor looks into the eyes and removes the particle of dust and as soon as it is removed, we are happy again as before. Is it any happiness that we have newly gained? It is only the restoration of what we had lost temporarily. This foreign matter in the eyes was responsible for the loss of the happiness which we

had. When it was removed, we got the happiness back. So, ignorance has come between us and God and made us think that we are not He. When the ignorance is removed we realise our true nature. This is how the great mystics realised. God is ever dwelling within us. God is pervading everywhere. We should become conscious of Him, conscious that we are ever one with Him.

MAHARSHI - 'WHO AM I'

M. S: It has been very well said by Sri Ramana Maharshi to find out 'Who am I'.

Ramdas: That means the 'I' which we ordinarily speak of does not exist. If we search for this 'I' and trace it to its origin, we shall find that it is not at all there. The example is given of an onion. If we search for the seed of the onion, we go on removing layers and layers of it, till we remove all the layers and find there are but layers and no seed. So, search for the 'I', and you will find the 'I' does not exist. The Maharshi's way of approaching the Truth is through the enquiry, 'Who am I?' You try to find it and it is not there at all. What do you find then? The all-pervading Reality. The mind that goes in search of the 'I', not finding it, loses itself in the all-pervading Truth. If anybody went to the Maharshi and put him any question, he at once asked him to find out who was the questioner, who that 'I' was, before he answered the question. The questioner went and never returned because he was busy finding out the 'I'.

LET NAME POSSESS YOU

In the same way, by repeating God's name, the mind goes within, settles down and loses itself in the divine Being. We at once realise that we are not the body, we are not an individual, and we are not the ego, but the Atman, the all-pervading, ever-existent universal Spirit or Truth. That is how we get the knowledge of the Truth through the power of the Name.

M. S: When we possess the Name, the Name does everything for us.

Ramdas: Yes. It does everything. It is not that we have to catch hold of the Name. The Name has to catch us. If this is done we are safe. We are vainly trying to catch it. In the Bhagavad Gita there is the Sloka;

सर्वे धर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।

अहं त्वा सर्वे पापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि माशुचः ॥

'Abandoning all duties come to Me alone for shelter, grieve not, and I will liberate you from all sins.' These are the words of Lord Krishna. They teach the path of surrender. We must dedicate ourselves to God completely so that the Name can take hold of us. We will then never forget God's name. That is Grace. Thirty-three years ago when Ramdas was living the ordinary worldly life, suddenly God caught hold of him. If Ramdas had tried to catch Him, he would not have got Him. As Tulsidas in one of his songs says, "O God! Say to me once, 'You are Mine'." So He must say 'You are Mine' to us. Then we are saved.

WHEN YOU SINCERELY ASPIRE FOR SATSANG, YOU GET IT

Ramdas: It is all joy to meet saints. Wherever there is a saint, Ramdas rushes to meet him and talk to him. Even in India, wherever he travels, he goes to meet saints.

M. S: In Europe we have very few opportunities for Satsang.

Ramdas: Satsang is the first thing necessary for the man who follows the spiritual path. It is very important. Without it no spiritual evolution is possible.

A Sufi Devotee: It is so difficult for Europeans. There are many who wish to meet a saint and get the Name from him. But they cannot find one. Their position is tragic. It is useless for us then to aspire to invoke the Name?

Ramdas: The Name can give you anything you want. If you have faith in the Name, it will bring you in contact with a saint. You need not go in search of him. If only your aspiration is sincere and true, saints will come to your place, or God will take you to their place. Is not your experience like that?

ALL ABOUT THE NAME OF GOD

A Sufi Devotee: The Name, I hope, should be appropriate to one's religion.

Ramdas: It should be according to one's liking. It must be one's Ishta. Even a Christian may call God by any name he chooses, in his own religion. There is a tank in which there are steps on all the four sides. Four men got down through the four

different sides and touched the water. One said it was 'jal', another said it was 'water', the third said it was 'pani', and the last said it was 'udak'. Though each one gave a different name, all the names were synonyms of water. We may similarly call God as Jesus, Allah, Rama or Krishna or by any other name; it represents the same Truth.

M. S: In the beginning the Name is hidden in the man. Afterwards the man is hidden in the Name. The Name is everywhere. Man is only a small point in the Name.

A Devotee: How long was it that you had searched before He took hold of you?

Ramdas: When He took hold of Ramdas, the search had ended.

Devotee: Was it a long search?

Ramdas: No, it was not long, but it was a frantic search. Ramdas was held by Him and even now he is in His arms — like a child in the arms of the mother. Now, no separation is possible, and there is no occasion for it because God has held the child. Before that Ramdas was restless, and now the restlessness has ceased. When he was repeating the Name, he felt God Himself was making him repeat the Name, because in the repetition there was joy. It was not done in order to get joy at some future time. The moment he repeated the Name, he was enjoying supreme bliss. That is the secret. If you think you are repeating the Name, by your own will and power, you will not get anything out of it. You get joy when you feel He is making you do so. If you think you are repeating it, you will be proud. Therefore a saint has said, 'First surrender yourself to God and then take His name.' Then the Name will be with you always and it will give you unending bliss and peace. Here surrender means the awareness, 'It is not my will, but it is by Your will that I am repeating Your name.' Verily, we remember God because God remembered us first. Otherwise we would never have remembered Him. His grace it is that makes us search for Him. If we have faith in this process, we shall have no reason to complain that His name does not taste sweet.

LOVE IS THE RHYTHM OF THE NAME

A Devotee: Do you always repeat the Name in the same rhythm?

Ramdas: What is most important is that we should have

love. Rhythm may be necessary, but love is what counts. The child would call the mother in any way, but it does so with all love and affection. The mother runs to the child. All depends upon the feeling when uttering the Name. Our heart should be full of devotion and longing for Him. Then alone He responds. We must have the rhythm of longing and the rhythm of love. We must put our heart and soul in the call. Calling Him means calling the One who is within us, 'O God, grant me Your Vision. I am calling You, so that You may come out and manifest Yourself and make me aware of Your presence, and fill me with Your power and wisdom, and make me behold You everywhere.' This is the purpose with which we are repeating the Name. If we take the name of God and think of Him constantly, we will become one with Him. As a man thinketh, so he becometh. So, if we think of God always, we will become God.

M. S: Swami Ramdas is like the Ganges that never get dry or tired.

Ramdas: When we are talking about God, we do not live in time. We live in the Timeless. That is why we feel happy. When we transcend time and space, we are happy. Meditation on God will take you beyond time and space. You will be merged in the universal Presence which is eternal, which is God. How can you then be unhappy? When you come down to time, you begin to adjust your affairs and make plans. We are now going to adjust our programmes! Will you kindly permit us to go?

LONDON,

1st October, 1954.

Speech at the Indian Students' Bureau, London.

Beloved Friends, — Ramdas is not going to tire you with a long speech because he is not a speech-maker himself. He has been sent from India, as the previous speaker told you, by the will of God, to propagate the ideal of universal love and service. We are so much absorbed in the day to day activities, that we are ignoring the spiritual values of life. It is essential that we should not lose ourselves in such activities and forget the source from which our life has come.

We think we are what we appear to be, mere bodies. But there is the eternal Spirit in us of which we should be conscious, before we can so order our life as to attain true happiness, and thereby bring harmony in the world. As it is, we find discord and dissension along with confusion of ideas, aims and aspirations. This is due to the fact that we have forgotten the supreme glory of the Truth that dwells within us. As we come to recognise this Truth and as we more and more become conscious of It, we feel that we are not merely the bodies, but the supreme undying Spirit which pervades everywhere and unites all beings into one family as children of one God. This is the way how we can live in mutual harmony and peace. This is the message which is very much needed in the present day world.

THE ART OF LIVING

This art of living can be practised only when we turn our minds inward for some time at least during the twenty-four hours of the day, and find that there is in us a Truth that binds us all together in mutual fellowship and goodwill. The Spirit is the Truth that pervades everywhere, out of which this vast universal manifestation has emanated. If we understand and realise this, we shall attain true happiness and impart the same to others by our contact, because then our selfishness will have left us and we shall develop love for our fellow-beings based on the knowledge of the indwelling Spirit. Many efforts are made in the world to bring about unity and harmony. But they have so far failed because their efforts are superficial and not founded on the underlying Reality

Man's quest is happiness. Happiness cannot be got by procuring so many things of the world that cater to our senses. This we have realised after striving hard for years and years. It can be found only when we turn our mind inward and find the source of eternal joy and peace within ourselves. That source is God. So God-remembrance, meditation on God, is the way by which we can get control over our minds and learn to live in peace and happiness, in perfect contentment. Without contentment there cannot be peace. The worldly things give us only momentary happiness. We are ever discontented. Suppose a man has earned one lakh of rupees. He is not satisfied. He wants two lakhs. When he gets two lakhs he wants four. So his desire also goes on growing as his wealth increases. He does not find any satisfaction. True satisfaction is got only when we tune our mind with that eternal joy within us. So, Ramdas' message to all is that they should turn the mind within for ever so short a period every day, so that they can live in the consciousness of the Spirit, by which alone man can attain real freedom and real joy.

God has been defined in the Hindu scriptures as Satchidananda: Absolute Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. That is the Truth about which Ramdas talked to you. As we tune our mind more and more with It, we shall get the happiness we are in quest of.

We all want harmony, whether we belong to the East or the West. We can have that harmony and the consequent peace and happiness by loving each other, taking ourselves to be the children of one divine parent who dwells in each one of us. God is not one to be imagined as dwelling far away from us. He is the indwelling Spirit of every one of us. By constantly thinking about Him, praying to Him, singing His glories, we get awakened to the consciousness of Him, and our life becomes utterly blessed.

MIDDLESEX, ENGLAND,

2nd October, 1954,

Talk with Monsieur Schuon at Jayaram House, Hayes End.

M. S: When I was young I searched for a Master and I heard of a great Sufi saint in North Africa. I had no money to go there. But soon God helped me to find a way and I went from France to North Africa. I went to the Ashram of the saint and asked the door-keeper if I could see the saint. He said he would go and ascertain. In a few minutes he returned and permitted me to see the saint. I stayed there for three months. I spent my time there in meditation with my Master. I went back to France. About a year later, suddenly, one day the Name took hold of me. For two days I could do nothing but say 'Allah, Allah'. Later I heard that just at that time the Master was dying in N. Africa. I went back to N. Africa and visited the tomb of the Master.

It is the practice among the Sufis that the Master shuts his disciple in a dark room and the disciple stays there for several days where he does nothing but to call on the Name. He eats once a day at sunset.

May be, one day I can come to India. I am not sure at all.

Ramdas: When God wills, you will surely come. We shall be so happy to have you there.

RAMDAS' REMINISCENCES

M. S: I wish to know where the Ashram of Swami Ramdas is.

Ramdas: It is near Mangalore in the South of India. It is a spot two and a half miles away from the town of Kanhangad, surrounded by hills. Ramdas was repeating God's name because he had lost attraction for the world and he wanted to see God, realise God. So with great intensity he was repeating God's name day and night, at the same time attending to his work. One day his father came to him and asked what he was repeating. When Ramdas told him that he was repeating 'Ram, Ram', he said he would give him a Mantra, and gave 'Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram'. This was thirty-three years ago. After this initiation Ramdas was repeating this Guru Mantra. Later, God within him became his Guru. Ramdas lost contact with his human Guru. He left the place and wandered all over India, with only one piece of cloth

and no money. He lived on alms. God caught hold of him from within and from without.

One day, when Ramdas got down in Ajmer station, a Muslim came and called him. In those days Ramdas would go with anybody who called him. So the Muslim friend took him to a place called Khaja Pir, a big tomb built over the remains of a great Muslim saint, and said, "Kneel down here. You have to become the disciple of Mohammed". Ramdas replied, "Ramdas is already a disciple of Mohammed". "Then all right, you may go", said the friend.

Sometimes Ramdas was asked to go to solitudes. He would go and remain in caves, taking God's name the whole day and night. He liked the caves very much and so the hills. He used to remain there for days together.

M. S: I had just been to Spanish Morocco to visit the tomb of a Negro saint. This saint sat on the top of a mountain and never spoke to anybody. His was a very simple life, sitting down in one place and invoking God's name. He died there itself.

HOW TO GAIN CONFIDENCE IN GOD

A Sufi Devotee: How can we attain that complete confidence in God?

Ramdas: By the grace of the Guru. There is no other way. God alone must give us that confidence. His grace alone can do it. We cannot acquire it by our own effort. If there is any effort on our part, it is only to go and meet the Guru, and open our heart to receive his light and grace. Then that confidence and faith will be created in us. Otherwise not. Before that, we are always full of doubts and our trust in God is not steady. It comes and goes. It can be established only by the Guru's grace. If you want to receive his grace, you must go to him with the windows of your heart open, i. e., you must go to him in all humility, without questioning. Then you will get his grace and your heart will be filled with the power of the Name, the power of God. Thereafter you will take the Name, invoke the Name with all faith, with unshaken faith, for, the grace is working in you.

Faith is a wonderful thing. A certain spiritually illumined soul was sitting, with many friends about him, talking of God. Suddenly, a man stricken with deep sorrow, who wanted to know God, happened to pass that way. Seeing the Master and disciples

sitting there, he approached them and said, "I am utterly miserable. I want to know God, I want to see God". At that time the Master was telling some story to the disciples and he had just said the word 'pestle'. The Master told him, "Go on repeating 'pestle, pestle'." The man took that word with all faith. He thought that must be the word of God. He went on repeating the word day and night. He got inner illumination by that power. It is said that from heaven a golden pestle came and took him to heaven because of his faith in the Name. Whatever it was, he took it for God's name. By the wonderful power of his faith he could go to heaven.

VALMIKI'S STORY

Valmiki was a robber. Once a saint was passing through the place where Valmiki lived. The robber fell upon the saint and wanted to wrest from him the musical instrument which he was having. The saint told the robber what a great sin he was committing by robbery. The robber said, "I am doing it only to feed my family. What I earn this way is not for me alone. I have my wife and children." The saint said, "Will you go and ask your wife and children if they would share the sin you are committing?" The robber agreed, went to his house and told his wife and children, "A saint who is passing this way has asked me to enquire if you are prepared to share the sins of my robbery, which I do only to feed you all." They replied, "We cannot share your sins. How you get the money for our expenses is not our concern". The robber came back to the saint, prostrated before him and said, "I do not want to commit sins any more." Then the saint, Narada, asked him to chant the Name 'Rama'. The robber could not repeat the Name properly. He was repeating it in the opposite way as 'Mara, Mara'. He gave up his worldly life, went to solitude and devoted all the time for the repetition of the Name. His austerities were so severe that he sat in one place for many years with the result that his body was covered by anthill. He had faith in the words of the Master who said, "If you repeat this Name you will be saved." So he became a great saint. Doubts should not cross our mind. Doubts are our worst enemies. Swami Ramatirtha has said, 'Instead of having a doubt in your heart, it is better to have a dagger there.'

SRI RAMANUJACHARYA

Ramdas remembers one instance in Sri Ramanujacharya's life. You must have heard of the three great Teachers—Shankara, Ramanuja and Madhwa. They have established their systems of philosophy in India. Ramanuja went to a Master and requested him to initiate him. The Master gave him God's name and also advised him not to tell this Name to anybody, adding that if he did so he would go to hell. At once Ramanuja went up to the top of the local temple and shouted, 'I am going to give you all a Name which will save you. My Master has given me that Name.' He uttered the Name also loudly so that everybody could hear. The Master heard about it and asked why he did so in spite of his warning. Ramanuja's reply was, "I am prepared to go to hell a hundred times if I can save thousands."

BURTON-ON-TRENT, ENGLAND,

3rd October, 1954.

Speech at the residence of Mr. Stephan Sheppard.

Beloved Friends, — We are all in search of eternal peace and joy, i. e., the eternal Kingdom of Heaven. This is our quest. After realising that supreme state, we become truly free and happy. The divine forces that do good to humanity are hidden in us. They manifest in us when we are in communion with the Divine. We are mistaken in thinking that Heaven is far away from us. Jesus has categorically told us that the Kingdom of Heaven is within us. In that Heaven God dwells. So He is dwelling within us. If we are conscious of this Truth, we can always be happy, free and cheerful. All our powers revealed through union with the Divine can be utilised for the uplift of others in every way. So what we have to do is to pray to God and meditate on Him.

THE FIRST THING WE HAVE TO KNOW

God is seated in our heart. This is the first thing we have to know, the first thing we must believe in. When we do that, the next step is easy. If we feel He is far away from us, we do not derive much benefit by meditating on Him. If we feel that He is within us, and pray to Him in the sanctum of our heart, then we can draw from Him light, grace, power and peace. When we pray to Him, let us shut our eyes and visualise Him as seated in our heart. Then the prayer will be soon heard. If we think He is far away from us, we may doubt whether our prayer reaches Him. It is easy to commune with Him in the heart, to pray to Him and surrender to Him. By resigning ourselves to His will, we release that divine force within us which contributes to our happiness and to the happiness of others. When we are conscious of this, we truly love our fellow beings, and by that love we shed on them light, peace and joy. Our life too becomes blessed that way.

This is not merely a mental exercise, but tuning of our mind with the Divine within us through constant remembrance and meditation. For this Ramdas found that the chanting of the Divine name was the easiest way. Many people think that the

Divine name cannot do anything. If we take the name of God with all faith and devotion we shall find that the mind which is so restless becomes perfectly at peace. When the mind is peaceful and still, we realise the existence of God within us. We doubt His very existence because our mind is restless. Our mind is full of outgoing tendencies. It is wishing and making plans all day. So we do not feel God within us, just as in moving and disturbed water we cannot see the reflection of our face. As soon as the water becomes still and waves have stopped, we can see the reflection clearly. So also the mind has to be purified and made still by constant remembrance of God through the utterance of His name, before we can feel His presence. His name is all-powerful.

WORK SHOULD BE DONE IN PLAYFUL SPIRIT

Work must be done without any strain. It must flow out of you spontaneously, in perfect cheerfulness. You are all living in the country, and it must be easy for you to dedicate what you do to the Lord by constant remembrance of Him, and thus make your life blissful. Now work is done like play. The ego is absent. You feel you are a child of God. God is your father and mother. He is the master and you are the servant. He is seated within you and is making you do everything. In that state you enjoy ineffable peace. This is the state we have to attain in this life.

THE HEART BLOSSOMS LIKE THE LOTUS

The soul is immortal and is one with God. This oneness can be realised by always thinking of Him and singing His greatness and glory. When the heart blossoms like a flower, it gives out the fragrance of love and peace divine. There is the lotus flower. When it is a bud you do not see its inner beauty. When the sun rises it blossoms. The light of the sun causes the petals to open and the fragrance and beauty of the flower are revealed in all grandeur. So also our heart which is like a flower opens when the light of God or divine grace shines on it. We must pray to the Divine to pour His grace on us so that our heart may blossom and reveal its inner beauty of love and compassion.

Prayer is the means to bring about contact of the soul with the Oversoul, the highest power within us. He is omnipresent;

as such He is present in our hearts too. When we think of Him constantly, we do feel His presence. This is called practising the presence of God. We can raise our mind to that supreme state wherein with our eyes we can see Him, and with our hands touch Him. He is more real than the things we see around us. But for Him we would not have been able to walk, talk or do anything. We think we are doing everything by our own power. If we only become conscious that by His will and power only we are doing everything, we shall never do wrong. We do wrong because we are unaware of Him.

LIVE FOR HUMANITY

As we give love to others, our store of love increases. Love is not like material wealth. As you give, it goes on increasing. You are happy yourself and you make others happy. People think that in their pursuit of happiness it is permissible to cause grief to others. That is not the way. Lord Buddha, the great spiritual Teacher who was born in India before Jesus Christ, says, 'Rejoice in the good fortune of others. Give love for hate.' He lived such a life. He loved those who hated him and thus transformed them.

We must be pure in thought, word and deed. Then only we can be really helpful to others. We understand a Chapel is going to be built here. It will be a blessed thing for you all to go there and sit silent and serene with your mind perfectly still. After prayers and repetition of God's name, you will see that the body-idea disappears and you are filled with divine radiance and grace. In that state, God's power will work through you. You can work wonders in elevating others, relieving the distress of others and bringing peace, happiness, health and every kind of good to others. This is quite possible.

Our life is not to be lived only for us, but for the humanity as a whole. That is why this precious human life is granted to us by God. God has gifted us with intelligence and His power can work through us. If we live such a life, then only we shall not have lived in vain. Therefore among the Hindus it is believed that this human body is given to us in order to realise Him, feel His presence always. This body is not meant to enjoy the pleasures of the senses. This is done by animals. If we live only for such pleasures, we are in no way better than animals. We are human beings and we can rise from the

human to the divine plane. We can realise the Divine in this very life.

LOVE - THE UNIVERSAL GOSPEL

Ramdas has been speaking very long. He has said all that he has to say. Still if you want to ask any questions, he is prepared to answer you in the light of his experience. He feels God's presence all the hours of the day and night, and he has come to you with the authority God has given him to talk to you. He would not have talked to you of God, if he himself has not found Him. God's grace has come to him and it has made him so blissful. He wants to share that joy with you all.

God is dear to us. He is the only dear one to us. Others do not come with us. We have to leave them behind and go away. The Divine is our only eternal companion. If we trust Him, He will never forsake us. He will guide and protect us and inspire us to do the right thing, and in every way take care of us. Such a loving Master and Mother we cannot afford to forget. Let us think of Him constantly, live, move and have our being in Him. He is all-pervading. He is eternal Existence, Consciousness and Bliss—Satchidananda. The Bible declares, "God is love. He who dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God dwelleth in him." So also in all the other scriptures God is defined as love. If we realise this love in our heart, how blessed we shall become!

Based on this attainment, Jesus said, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself.' Verily, in Spirit we are all one. He dwells in the hearts of all of us. In the light of this knowledge, we cannot but love all alike. Now all our petty jealousies and anger will vanish completely. We shall be kind, compassionate and loving. A saint has said, 'God dwells in that heart wherein compassion, forgiveness and kindness reside.' We must develop these virtues. This is possible only by His grace. When we do not know how to control the mind, we must call upon God to give us strength. Prayer is the way to battle against so many desires which we cannot control. If they are not controlled, we shall act wrongly, for which we shall afterwards repent. Repentance comes to us only too late. We cannot take back the words already spoken or the actions already done by us. So our understanding must be imbued with divine inspiration. That is possible only when we commune with God, keep our mind in tune with Him by constant remembrance, meditation and prayer. Let us try to remember

Him all day and night. Some people think their work will suffer if they remember Him. That is not the case. The undercurrent of God-remembrance will go on even when we are at work. We develop a consciousness or awareness of God which is maintained at all hours, even when we are working. But in the early stages it is not easy to keep it up. There is a struggle. But gradually it becomes possible, if during our off hours, when we have leisure, we think of Him. Those who work with their hands take His name with the tongue, and attune themselves with God. Then work becomes worship. Work is devotion to God just as prayer.

EXAMPLE OF ANANDASHRAM

When Ramdas is telling you all these things, you should not be under the impression that he is not doing any work in the Ashram. We have our prayer time there. We have our way of taking God's name. We have also an elementary school for poor children. We have work in the fields for raising some crops. We have also to look after our fruit garden. We have a dairy where there are sixty cows. All these activities we are carrying on and still we feel we are one with our Divine Master. He is always with us and everywhere about us.

Mother Krishnabai, who is here with us, is working all the day, from early morning till 10 o'clock at night. She works in the kitchen, fields, cowshed and all other places. She does not merely supervise, but she does work with her own hands. She does not see any difference between master and servant. It is a community life that we are leading. Each one is given some work and he does it cheerfully, as it is done for the sake of God. Philosophy should not make us idle. Idleness is not the way. Pray when you have to pray. Work when you have to work. Work also then becomes prayer. When you do work in His name, it becomes holy work, consecrated work. Ramdas seems to be carrying coals to Newcastle. You are all doing work here harmoniously, in a simple and unsophisticated manner, having firm faith in God. Still, as our friend wanted Ramdas to come here and talk to you, he does so. Moreover, however much we are in tune with God, to hear about Him is added joy to us. Ramdas has come from a far off place to talk to you about God, and you like to hear him.

Mr. McSweeney: It is not carrying coals to Newcastle.

Ramdas: That shows how loving you are. Your heart is already full of that love which Ramdas has been talking about all along.

McSweeney: The trouble is that we do not want to lose you now. It has been a glorious hour.

Ramdas: Ramdas finds groups of people eager to hear him talk about God's name and dedicated work. What a heartening thing it is to feel He is within us! We might be thinking that He is far away. One day we have to open our inner eye and see Him within us.

ON HEALING

McSweeney: We are interested a lot in healing. What is the great difference between Pranic healing and Divine healing?

Ramdas: Divine healing is the correct thing. When you are in tune with God and your mind is still and concentrated, a divine force is released in you and it is that power that heals. In Ramdas' case such things are happening, although he is not consciously doing it. He is made to do certain unusual things at which he himself is surprised. Once, in his wandering life, when he was resting in the verandah of a house in a small village, a man suddenly came running and asked Ramdas to go with him. The man said, "There is a lady who is very ill. Please bless her so that she may be healed." Ramdas never knew anything about healing by spiritual power. In those days he was docile and went with anybody who called him. He sat near the patient and was asked to pass his hand over her. Ramdas did so. She was running about 105 degrees temperature. After that, Ramdas went back to the place where he was resting. Within five minutes the same man came and said the temperature of the patient had come to normal. Many such things have happened in his life. Ramdas says it is not his power that did it, but God's power. He is only an instrument through which God's power works. God did the healing.

Then, another friend who wished to purchase a Derby ticket wanted Ramdas to tell him what number would win. Ramdas said that he did not know. He wanted Ramdas to ask God. Ramdas said, 'Nothing doing'.

Your aim must be to realise Him and feel your union with Him. Let not healing be the objective. Merely healing means, you stop your progress with that. If instead of conserving your

spiritual power for attaining the goal you lose it in these practices, you will achieve nothing in the end. But if you keep your battery charged every day, you can march onward on the divine path. The battery is charged by continuous thought of God. When you have seen God, you can not only heal people of their illnesses, but also awaken them to the consciousness of God. Your main aim should be to keep your mind attuned to God. Let His power work through you in whatever way He wills. Your presence itself must be so dynamic that those who come near you must not only be healed of their physical ailments, but also be awakened to the Divine.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NEW YORK.

7th October, 1954.

Talks with Dr. Alexander Imich, at Prince George Hotel.

Dr. Imich: Swami, I know you are helping those who have already faith in God. But what about those who have no faith in Him? How are you going to create in them faith in God? You should be able to make the unbelievers believe in Him. I am not satisfied with your merely helping those who are already on the path. You must awaken thousands.

Ramdas: If God's will is that Ramdas should be made an instrument for awakening people in thousands, he will submit to it. Ramdas is only a humble servant doing the duty God has given him. Sometimes things, that we do not think of, happen. Nothing is impossible for God. Ramdas is at all times in tune with God. His will be done.

Ramdas feels so familiar with you. There is a spiritual kinship between you and him because you are for him the very embodiment of God. Books are nothing. Mere talking also is of no avail. Living the real life is everything. We must live with a person who has realised God and study what it is to live in God.

HOW TO MAKE UNBELIEVERS BELIEVE IN GOD

Dr. Imich: We do not know what God wishes. We must try to do what is best. We would like to organise something, so that all may have the benefit of hearing you. May be, Swami Ramdas will speak and create an impression not only upon a few friends who are on the spiritual path, but on the whole population.

Ramdas: You have now a few minutes' talk with Ramdas. Do you think that a contact with a large number of people will produce the result aimed at?

Dr. Imich: I do not think, so far as unbelievers are concerned. They cannot believe you. American boys and girls, ah!

Ramdas: Do you think they will take seriously Ramdas' words, unless there is some power behind the words? There must

be some power. Then only it is possible. Do you think Ramdas will be able to induce that power and make them change?

Dr. Imich: It is quite possible. I think there is another way of making them believe. Proof of God-realisation must be given to them. They say, "May be he is merely thinking, or he is having a hallucination."

Ramdas: Until one gets that experience, it is quite natural that one should doubt it. Seeing is believing. Unless they see they cannot believe.

FAITH BASED ON MIRACLES IS NO GOOD

Dr. Imich: What about miracles? If miracles are performed they might believe.

Ramdas: Faith based upon miracles will not last long. Before three or four thousand people, Jesus performed miracles, and ultimately twelve men alone believed in him, and even out of that twelve so many denied him. Inner opening to a spiritual experience is what is needed and not merely a spectacular miracle which produces no permanent result.

Dr. Imich: I have the answer for that. It is not so. You see, may be, the Westerner has his own way to approach the Spirit world. He cannot jump away from the intellectual way. He must go intellectually and must come to the conviction that matter or energy is not all, that there is the Spirit. This can be done by showing the scientist a miracle. Once the proof is given to him, he cannot say God does not exist. A great scientist like Einstien speaks of God. He has intelligence. But how can he speak of God? He has not realised God. He at once makes a jump; but he has no right to speak of God. Many scientists think that God must be beyond matter and energy.

Ramdas: When Einstien declared that he believed in God, many people of his own rank were not prepared to hear him.

SCIENTISTS' DIFFICULTY

Dr. Imich: It is not the personal conviction of Einstien that matters. Scientifically it must be proved that God exists. Scientists do not believe in the past miracles of which there is no proof, as no records were made of them and no films were taken. Without proof you cannot expect the West to turn from the ways of the intellect to God. A few dozen people may believe and will

be very pleased to meet the Swami from India. That is not enough. I want Ramdas to make thousands believe in God. Or we must come to the conviction that the spiritual progress of humanity cannot be speeded up. If you tell me that people will turn to the spiritual way in another 1000 years, I am not satisfied with that.

Ramdas: You have put your case very nicely and frankly. Ramdas likes it very much. You have made out a very good case for the scientists.

Dr. Imich: I am very glad.

Ramdas: It is true, people who are very intellectual have come to disbelieve in the existence of God. Even the so-called believers are not really believing. They are still assailed by doubts. They also sometimes think if this is not a hallucination after all. This is the position of the so-called believers. They stumble upon the Reality after some wonderful experience and admit that there is God and He is the Reality. But it is not anything to be shown like a magic.

Dr. Imich: It should not, however, be a mere matter of personal experience. It should be objective like science. It should come to all. It should come to the whole world. It must be brought within the reach of every one.

Ramdas: That is what Ramdas is striving to do. He wants to tell everybody that God can be realised in this life. That is his mission. That is why he has come all the way from India. We have been in the plane for 22 hours from London. At this age, why should Ramdas go all the world over? It is only to spread the great message of God and His name, to impress on every one that God can be attained by taking His name. Ramdas is doing only what God asks him to do.

Dr. Imich: Did you enjoy the flight?

Ramdas: Ramdas takes every situation in which God places him as for good. He is happy always.

Dr. Imich: May I ask you for some personal advice? You know what I am. I have no personal experience. I do not make any spiritual progress.

Ramdas: Ramdas is giving everything that he can possibly give you in a spiritual way, that is, by loving you. Love is the way by which he is pouring out his heart to you, so that your heart may be awakened and you may be full of peace. May God grant you that peace in your heart!

LOVE IS THE ONLY MIRACLE

Dr. Imich: You are a good person. People love you.

Ramdas: Everywhere Ramdas went, people loved him.

Dr. Imich: Could you live in America and live the same person? It is so difficult. Life is not easy in this country. People are different here.

Ramdas: We get so many visitors in our Ashram. They stay with us for one or two months. They move freely with us because the Ashram does not observe caste, creed or other distinctions. All are like brothers and sisters to us. They also go to various places in India and come in contact with many saints. Contact with a saint is what we consider to be an essential thing. Reading books won't do. Contact with a saint alone can grant the experience of the higher life. It is with this purpose this child of God is moving about. So many who have come in contact with Ramdas have felt enlightened. We have so many letters from friends who got spiritual experiences by coming in contact with Ramdas. Ramdas also felt so much peace in their company, because love is the most important thing in our life. If we get that love our life becomes blessed. Love is God. Jesus rightly said, 'God is love.' It is not a mere imaginary thing. To love them is the only miracle that we can show to others; not the miracle of doing something which is forgotten afterwards.

Dr. Imich: But scientists want something like that.

Ramdas: Are you also a scientist?

Dr. Imich: Yes. I am interested in science.

Ramdas: We are also interested in science. But science should be used for constructive purposes, not for destructive purposes. If it can help humanity in any way, let it be used. When we all join together in love, then science will be of great use to humanity. It is, no doubt, doing something useful now, but it must be made to do more on the basis of love. Man must shed his selfishness and be truly good to humanity. You have heard the teaching, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself.' Rabindranath Tagore was asked how one can love another as oneself when the two are different altogether. He said that according to the Hindu philosophy the Self in you and another are one. So on the basis of the Self, you can love your neighbour as yourself.

Dr. Imich: I must be going now. I derived very great pleasure from this meeting; not merely pleasure, but something more precious than that. Perhaps I shall be able to better appreciate it afterwards.

NEW YORK

9th October, 1954.

At the residence of Miss Elizabeth Achelis.

PRACTISING GOD'S PRESENCE

Questioner: How can we become established in the experience of God; how can we keep up the link for twenty-four hours of the day?

Ramdas: You can by practice keep up Divine consciousness for all the twenty-four hours. Ramdas can tell you this from his own experience. He was awakened to the supreme purpose of his life thirty-three years ago. This was to realise God. He was struggling for some time to remain in that consciousness at all times. God by His grace gave him constant remembrance of Him, by the incessant repetition of His holy name, which means he was able to tune himself with God all the day and night. He came to experience the Divine presence and a peace that passeth all understanding. You must persist in maintaining this consciousness. Every day you must try for this attainment. This consciousness and peace will be with you even when you are active in the world. Then that will be a permanent background in your life and will remain in you like an undercurrent. This is what is called the presence of God.

Q: What do you say about the technique for feeling the presence of God always?

Ramdas: When you sit silently and strive to dissolve all thoughts, you find it very difficult. Some thoughts come and go. So it is better to have one thought to the exclusion of all other thoughts. Let this thought be the symbol of God. And after some time, when you are in a position to keep this thought alone in the mind, you must try to dissolve that also. When that thought too is dissolved, your mind is perfectly calm and free from all thoughts.

Sit silent and watch the mind. Know that names and forms have to be transcended. Surrender yourself to the eternal Spirit dwelling within you. Then you will be able to realise the presence of God always.

TIME AND SPACE ARE ONLY CONCEPTUAL

Q: What about time and space?

Ramdas: If we meditate on God as the absolute Truth, we

take Him to be the supreme Reality transcending time, space and causation. We live in time when we live in the relative plane of life. In the Absolute there is neither time nor space. The division of time as past, present and future is merely conceptual. Yesterday was today and tomorrow will be today. Nobody saw yesterday and nobody will see tomorrow. So the time factor seems to belong only to the mental plane which has no meaning in the absolute existence. Time can be transcended by stilling the mind.^o So also, space and causation.

BEGINNER SHOULD START WITH THE MANIFEST

Q: To a beginner, do you suggest he should start from the Unmanifest?

Ramdas: It is better to start with the Manifest.

Q: I had some experience of the Unmanifest and I find it easier to concentrate on that.

Ramdas: If you have already some experience of the Unmanifest, it is all right your trying to contemplate on it; but those who have had no such experience must start with the Manifest. Repeat the name of God and when the mind becomes still, you will be taken above all names and forms. For those who possess a restless mind, Name is a great help.

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA, U. S. A.,
14th October, 1954.

° *Speech at the residence of Mr. J. R. Raymer, Jr.,
316 Stonebridge Blvd., St. Paul 5.*

Beloved Friends, — Ramdas is a child of God and as such he introduces himself to you. You are all his dear friends, the very forms of his eternal Beloved, whom he has found in his heart. In your company he feels quite at home. He does not feel that he is in the midst of strangers. You seem to be known to him from time immemorial, because our relationship is not merely physical, but is of the eternal Spirit that dwells in the hearts of every one of us. In the light of that knowledge and experience, he lays before you an account of his spiritual life from the time it started in 1921. That time onwards God has taken him up and made him His own. He is at present imbued with the light, power and joy of that supreme being who is his Beloved, as well as of you all, because He is seated in the hearts of all. Such a one has taken Ramdas up and has absorbed him into His splendrous Being. Ramdas feels His presence every moment of his life. After granting this experience, it was His will that he should leave India and wander over the whole globe and come in contact with friends, so that he can talk to them about God, and thus enjoy himself and also give joy to them.

HOW WE BECOME LIKE HIM

We are all here in this world to have that joy and peace that passeth all understanding, as described in the New Testament. It is that peace that we have to achieve in this life. It can come only when we keep our mind always thinking, remembering, meditating on our divine Beloved. If we do that continuously, without any break, we will be accepted by Him and He will surely pour into us His grace and transform us into His likeness.

YOU AND HE ARE ONE

Jesus has said, 'I and my Father are one.' The subject on which Ramdas has been asked to speak today is 'You and He are one'. This great privilege God has given us as human beings.

Some people may be startled when we tell them that God and they are one. They think we are puny, erring mortals. How can we expect to be one with the Divine Being! This is possible when our being is purged of all its low passions and is enlightened fully by His will, power and wisdom. We can be like Him. We can raise ourselves to the same status to which Jesus wants us to elevate ourselves. In the olden days, those who asserted that they were one with God, were not liked by people. Even Jesus, when he declared that he and his Father were one, was not looked upon with favour by people who ultimately crucified him. He said definitely that the Kingdom of Heaven is within us. That means God dwells within us, because God is where the Kingdom of Heaven is. Verily, heart is the throne in which He is seated. If we are conscious of Him constantly, we can make the Divine within us reveal Himself and fill us through and through in all parts of our being and radiate joy and light to everybody with whom we come in contact.

LET US BE LIKE CHILDREN

This is the purpose for which God has given this life to us. We see life around us in animals, but animals are not gifted with the power and capacity to understand the ways of God, submit to the will of God and make God the sole object and aim of life, so that God may reveal Himself in their heart and transform them into His very image. God can make us into His own image. But we have forgotten Him, and the result is that we have come to grief. If we remember God and feel His presence, we can make our life simply sublime. The one thing required is complete resignation to the Divine will. When that is done, His grace flows into us and we become His true children — children in the sense in which Jesus said, "Unless we become like children, we cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven." We become so pure, so innocent, so spontaneous like children in all that we do. We live like a flower that gives its fragrance to everybody. Its very nature is to emit fragrance. So our life will be a spontaneous outflow of peace and love that we have gained by submitting to His will. Because, by submitting to His will, the ego will be wiped out.

You may be surprised why Ramdas is speaking in the third person. Ramdas does not say 'I'. Somehow, thirty-three years ago, this 'I' was taken away by God. One morning he found he

could never utter 'I'. 'Ramdas' is the name given to him by God. 'Ramdas' means servant of God. He has become His humble servant. As such he is going from place to place, spreading His name, asking everybody to remember Him so that their mind may be purged of all impurities and they can feel the presence of the Divine within them.

Before Ramdas started this speech, friends had advised him that he should speak slowly; but when he started talking, he could not control himself. He went on at high speed and that has produced the dryness of the throat which is an obstacle. You will kindly excuse him for this. You will, of course, excuse him because you are like mothers to him.

He does not see any distinction between North, South, East and West. He sees the whole universe as his home. He is moving about in the universe as from one room to another. It is his Father-Mother's home in which the child freely goes about and loves everybody, because all who live in that home are the children of that Father-Mother—God. This seems to be a wonderful thing.

A PARADOX

How can you be a child and at the same time be one with Him? This is a paradox, very difficult to understand. But that is the truth. When God led Ramdas on the path of spiritual discipline in order to purify him and make him fit to receive Him full grace, he knew that he was under His protection. He was crying to God to reveal Himself to him so that he could become entirely His. He would have his mind always remembering, thinking, contemplating on Him alone, without having anything to do with the things of the world. God heard that prayer and as a result He, who is seated in Ramdas' heart, took possession of him and granted His vision and experience. He showered His grace like this, and revealed Himself in all His grandeur to him and told him, 'O child, you and I are not different. We are one in the highest spiritual sense.' Thereafter His light and grace overflowed in this child. He feels one with Him and still he is His child and servant, for God is his mother and master. As master He guides him, and as mother He protects him.

When Ramdas was in France last month he met Swami Siddheswarananda there after about ten years. The Swamiji remarked that Ramdas was growing younger. People in India

wondered how Ramdas would be able to stand this strenuous tour. Ramdas told them that God is there to see that His mission is fulfilled. It is not that Ramdas has come to teach you. You know what you have to realise. You know what you have to gain. You know by experience that He is within you. But it is a joy to talk of Him. This is the greatest thing. You may take God to be the impersonal Truth, you may take Him to be personal. But besides these, He is your true companion. He is your father and mother and is always with you. You can talk to Him, you can glorify Him, you can sing of Him and you can do all things in His name and enjoy eternal Bliss. To merge yourself in Him is nothing but to feel His fellowship and do everything in His name. This gives unparalleled joy. You cannot express it. You can only experience it.

If you only depend upon the personal companionship of God, it is sure that you will feel a painful sense of separation when you miss Him. If you experience only the impersonal Truth, you are likely to be disturbed while moving about in the world of action, name and form. There is still a greater experience. You have to realise the supreme Godhead who is at once personal and impersonal. When you have realised this, you are established in absolute peace and bliss in whatever condition you are placed. Knowing your identity with Him, you remain separate from Him, maintaining a close relationship with Him as between child and mother, and servant and master, or friend and friend.

"MY DEVOTEE NEVER PERISHES"

In this constant companionship with God, you never miss Him even for a single minute. You feel His presence everywhere. You know that He is guiding you at every step, and your love flows out spontaneously towards all. There is ever freshness and cheer in your life. There is neither fatigue nor depression. It is like this. When the mother is there, the child is joyous; and when she is away it is restless. Similarly when you feel His presence, you are happy. He is the dearest object of your heart. You can feel His presence more intimately than that of your own kith and kin. You can see and touch Him; He is nearer to you than anybody else. If you have a relationship with Him, you are supremely blessed. Then there is no likelihood of your falling away from Him. Therefore He has said in the Bhagavad Gita, "My devotee never perishes." This is when you have surrendered

yourself to Him completely. When you hold Him, there is always a likelihood of your falling. When you surrender to Him, He holds you and you are ever safe and secure. Then you can bravely move in the world and still remain perfectly pure and unaffected. No temptation can attack you and pull you down to the life of your lower nature. You will remain firmly fixed in the Divine consciousness in which you realise your oneness with God and feel 'I and He are one.' In Spirit you are ever one with Him; but you remain as His children, not to fulfil your plan but to fulfil His plan, to spread the spontaneous love which flows out of your heart. God is love, and when He reveals Himself in your heart, your entire life will be animated by this love.

SUBORDINATE INTELLECT TO HEART

It is said that through intellect you must try to understand God. But reason can create only doubts. It intervenes and spoils your faith in God. So reason is considered useful only up to a stage of spiritual progress. Then you have to open the portals of your heart and give all your love to that Divine Being. God resides in the heart which is the seat of love. All the scriptures declare that love is the real nature and attribute of God. If you have to see Him, your head must bow down to the heart. Let reason be quiet for a while. Open the windows of your heart. Give all your adoration to Him so that His grace may work in you for a complete transformation. Now you will become an illumined being and you will know that you and He are not different. Your actions then belong to eternity. You live like the sun giving light to all. The sun gives light because it is his nature. Your true nature is to shed love, peace and joy on all. Yours will be selfless, motiveless love, and motiveless action will flow out of you. A child plays. Why does it play? Because it is its nature to play. Similarly your actions will be spontaneous. This is the message of the Bhagavad Gita. It is the ego that claims, 'This is my action'. When the ego is absent, you become inspired always by the Divine in you. You are a veritable image of God.

GOD—THE MAGNET

Here Ramdas may tell you something important from his own experience. First of all he must declare that nothing can be

achieved on the spiritual path unless God's grace descends on us. He must first awaken us. It is Grace alone in the beginning, in the middle and at the end of our spiritual endeavours. Man in his arrogance says he will be able to do all things. If a man thinks he is able to do anything, let him do it. He will come to know by experience that by his effort he is not able to do anything. When that stage is reached, he will surrender to God, confessing that he is helpless. Unless we feel we are nothing and He is everything, He will not accept us. So He alone must guide us on the difficult path of spiritual discipline. 'A devotee rightly says, 'O God, I remember You because You remembered me first.' He must draw us towards Him. Then alone we can go to Him. It is just like a needle attracted by a magnet. We must become needles for the Divine magnet to draw us towards It. How to become needles? This is possible only by wishing to have Him, aspiring to have Him, and Him alone and nothing else in the world.

WHERE LOVE IS, THERE MIND IS

A question is often raised why our mind is restless and cannot concentrate on God. The reason is that our love for God is so very little. If it is intense, our mind will automatically go to Him. Where our love is, there our mind is. We love worldly things more than we love God. We must pray to Him to give us one-pointed love and devotion to Him. Through constant remembrance of Him we have to purify our mind. There is no other way to purify it. Only the thought of God can remove all passions from it and make it perfectly pure. In the pure mind it is that God's light reflects. "Blessed is he who is pure in heart because he shall see God." God must sow the seed of the Divine name in our mind. Then only it will sprout and grow and in the fullness of time bring forth the flower of divine radiance, peace and joy. This is possible only when His grace is on us. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa gives the instance of a kitten that cries from a corner with the result that the cat rushes and takes it up. So if we cry with all our heart — if we surrender to Him completely — God will surely respond. When we have once become His, He guides our life and we become aware that it is He who creates all circumstances and situations from time to time. He is so merciful, compassionate and kind, and from Him no evil can come.

THE SOURCE OF EVIL

Where is evil then? It is in the mind which is not in tune with God. Forgetfulness of God is the cause of all evil in the world. There is a saying, 'Good or evil, thinking makes it so.' If we reflect on the events of our life, we find that by taking some of them to be evil we have suffered. We have taken some as for our good and we have been happy. So it is our attitude towards the events that makes us either miserable or happy. There is no standard of good and evil. The ideas of sin and misery arise from the denial of God. So long as we are in tune with Him, we take every situation in which He places us as for our good. Then we say, 'Thy will be done'. So the man who has surrendered himself to God does not grumble or find fault with anybody. In all conditions he enjoys perfect peace and bliss. This is the real test of surrender.

IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO PRAISE THE NAME

Before Ramdas closes, he would tell you that God in His mercy gave him His holy name for remembering Him constantly. When the Name was on his lips, he felt as if he was having a nectarine pill on his tongue. He was thus enjoying the sweetness of communion with God the moment the Name came on his tongue. God who was hidden within Ramdas became manifest and His light entered into every part of Ramdas' being through which His glory radiated.

Ramdas met in Europe many disciples of Christ and told them that the name of Jesus is so sweet. They wanted the name of Jesus to be given to them from Ramdas' lips. They admitted Jesus' name is very sweet. It is not enough to praise the Name, but you must take the Name. 'The taste of the pudding lies in eating.' You must have the Name continuously on your tongue with love and adoration for Him in your heart. Ramdas was repeating the Name day and night without break. For the sake of uttering the Name at all times, he kept vigil all the night. For this he had to give up food. He went to solitude and for twenty-four hours he was chanting the Name and he was getting into divine ecstasies.

NAME IS A BRIDGE BETWEEN YOU AND GOD

Such is the power of the Name. The Name purifies you and raises you to the pinnacle of God-realisation. It is so simple, yet so powerful and potent. Know that divine grace has come to you, if you have the Name *always* on your tongue. For, you become conscious of Him within and He reveals Himself in all His splendour and absorbs you into His being. Then the difference between you and He is lost. Name is the bridge between you and God.

Which name of God you repeat is not of importance. But you must remember that the Name represents God within you. So you can repeat any Name you hold dear and fill yourself with divine ecstasy. This is the easiest and best method by which you can purify yourself. This is what the sages and saints in all parts of the world are dinning into your ears. Think of God and you become the image of God. Take the holy Name and you become holy. You need not do any other spiritual practice than praying to God and taking His name. This is the positive and direct method for His light, power and joy to pour into and change you by removing all the obstacles in the way of your approach to Him, such as the ego-sense and all the desires such as ambition for name and fame.

Ramdas has nothing by himself to talk except what God wants him to talk. He is not a scholar and he has no academic education. So he talks to you like a child. By hearing him, so many who had only a lukewarm devotion for God, got it intensified, and those who had not any, got it. This is the humble mission with which he goes from place to place—to awaken God in the hearts of people. Faith should guide us and not reason. A friend asked Ramdas once why God should have given the intellect if it is not to be used. He answered: "Intellect is given in order to know that we do not know anything." Heart is given to us so that we can feel Him, realise Him, love Him and have Him.

AN UPANISHAD STORY

There is a story in the Upanishads. On a tree there were two birds. One was sitting quiet on the topmost branch. The other bird was hopping about here and there on a lower branch, tasting the fruits, some of which were sour and some sweet. When it ate the sour fruits it was unhappy, but it was happy

when it ate the sweet ones. So with unhappiness and happiness alternating, it was going on till it looked up and saw the bird that was sitting quiet and serene. As soon as the bird on the lower branch saw the one on the top sitting quiet, the former ceased to exist. So also the ego in us, enjoying the sweet and sour fruits of life, one day looks up to the Divine and ceases to exist. Some say you merge in God and you have nothing left. That is not the case. You now know you are one with God and still you are His child, servant or a devotee. In this way you keep up the relationship with Him. All your worldly ambitions are wiped out and your life flows out in streams of love to the entire humanity. This is the state you have to attain. This is the ideal which the great incarnations, that have come to the world for the uplift of humanity, place before you.

Saints and incarnations are a source of great inspiration. Ramdas often brings before him the figure of Jesus, because Ramdas has seen him in a vision when he was living in a cave in the Himalayas. He saw Jesus sitting before him. If we remember saints, our heart simply bubbles with joy. How pure, glorious and innocent they are! And that such an innocent one like Jesus, full of divine light, should be crucified! The very thought of it gives such a revulsion to the things of the world. All things we call our own come and go. We neither bring them with us when we are born, nor do we take them with us when we go. We still attach ourselves to these things, forgetting the supreme Master, who can make us like Him and raise us to His stature. What a love He bore for all of us! What wonderful love it was!

WHAT MORE DO YOU WANT

God's grace came to Ramdas and made him what he is now. Ramdas feels that it is nothing to have dedicated one life for what he has attained. He could sacrifice millions of lives for it at the feet of the Master. After all, what do we give to God? Only the perishable part of us. What does He give in return? He gives us the Imperishable. We even hesitate to give him the perishable in exchange for the Imperishable. What the pleasures of the world give us is nothing compared to the divine light and the peace and joy that you get by union with Him. That joy is eternal. In scriptures it is described as self-existent Bliss. The Bliss does not depend upon any state or condition. Whether you

are in a high or a low position, whether people praise you or blame you, that bliss within you is flowing out perennially. God is Sat-Chit-Ananda. Such a Truth you are. If you are conscious of it, if you become one with it, what more do you want? That is why it is said to be self-existent — therefore self-sufficient.

A LIVING REALITY

God is a living Reality. He is not a hallucination or mere conception of the mind as some take Him to be. Those who say so are entirely mistaken. Scientists cannot find out what He is. They want to put Him in the test-tube and find out what He is and is not. No, that is not the way. God is Truth. Thirty-three years now, Ramdas got the joy of union with Him and the contact and realisation continues to this date. It will continue for all time. This is not phantasy. This is not imagination. Ramdas can definitely say that God is and He is eternal love and bliss. This is the experience of the sages and saints all over the world. People may say as they like, because they do not know. They do not seek Him and therefore do not find Him. You must have faith in the words of the saints who have experienced the Truth. Suppose you want to go to India. You must have faith in the words of one who has gone there. He shows you the path. You follow him and reach India. So also you have to take the words of saints with faith and follow the path chalked out by them. Then you will also surely find Him.

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA, U. S. A.,

15th October, 1954.

Speech at Curtis Hotel

HOW TO CONTROL THE MIND

Dear Friends,—Today Ramdas has been asked to talk on the subject 'How to control the mind'. As you all know, to control the mind is indeed very difficult. But control of the mind is essential for the spiritual aspirant who is a real seeker of God and wants to attain Him.

When we sit for meditation or for prayer, we find that our mind is wandering and thinks of various things. So when we wish to concentrate upon God, we are unable to do so or find it extremely difficult. This is a great obstacle in the path. Every one of us knows by experience that whenever we find we have committed something wrong, we make a resolution that we will not do it again. In the first instance, we do not realise at all that we have done anything wrong. But in due time, when we come in contact with a great soul, a person who is living a righteous life, believing in God and drawing inspiration from Him, we are awakened, and come to know that we are going on a wrong path. But even after knowing that, we go the same way; we are unable to control the mind. We are helpless. The mind induces us to do things which we ought not to do. Here lies our difficulty. How often we see a man who is given to a certain vice, bringing disgrace and degradation on himself and misery upon others! A day comes when he repents for his acts and wants to control himself and says that he will no longer be subject to that vice. But he finds it very difficult to abstain from it and falls a prey to it again. He is helpless. He is unable to have any control over his thoughts and actions.

GOD MUST COME TO THE RESCUE

Under such circumstances, how to get the necessary strength to subdue the mind and make it think on the right lines so as to live the right life? God must come to our rescue. Ramdas can quote many instances in which people who were given to the worst of vices, when they came in contact with a saint, gave up

entirely such vices against which they were battling in vain for years together. So the first thing necessary is to contact a great soul, a soul who is the beloved of God. He can infuse strength and courage in our heart so that we can draw the necessary strength to put down wrong desires that make our life miserable. So the power for control comes to us from God. As we commune with Him, meditate on Him and pray to Him sincerely, we will be able to control the mind and free it from all thoughts which lead us astray, and we shall be saved. So God comes into play in our life when we sincerely call for His help and depend entirely upon His power to save us. This is most true in the case of a spiritual seeker who really wishes to have that peace, purity and joy which is born of communion with God. This is the chief aim of human existence.

According to all religions, certain forms of discipline are imposed upon us for self-purification. Purification is possible only by our putting ourselves under some strict discipline in our conduct, in our ways of life. If we allow ourselves to be carried away by every thought that rises in our mind, every impulse that seizes us, then we stray away from the path of righteousness. Therefore it is incumbent upon every one of us, from time to time, to retire from our worldly activities, sit silent by ourselves, pray to the Divine residing within us, and draw the necessary inspiration, in order to resist all temptations and keep our mind perfectly pure. This is the only way. Because, without surrendering ourselves to the Divine, without meditating upon Him constantly, we cannot get full control over the mind. There are some people who vainly think that by their own efforts they will be able to control and keep their mind concentrated upon God. So many people who had been struggling for years and years have found it a hopeless task.

SECRET OF SUCCESS

Ramdas, in his wandering life, once came across a man who had renounced the world in order to realise God. He was striving for thirty years, but had not had a glimpse of Him. Ramdas found out from a talk with him that he was struggling by his own strength, which was so very feeble compared to the great strength which we can draw from God. That was the cause of his failure. Even if we struggle hard for any number of years, we cannot attain perfect purity. We can succeed only by His grace.

What is the chief thing we have to do in order to make ourselves fit to receive His grace? We must have absolute humility and think always of His glory and power. The glow-worm that shines at night is not seen when the sun shines. As it shines in darkness, so our ego shines in the forgetfulness of God. When we are awakened to the knowledge of God, when we remember Him constantly and think of His greatness and glory, then our ego dwindles into insignificance. Man is proud because he has forgotten God and His greatness. So we must bring into our mind His greatness and glory, as that practice will make us pure and humble, and all undesirable thoughts and desires will disappear at once. This is the secret.

Some people believe that they should practise discipline like Ashtanga Yoga, as described by Patanjali, a great sage of India. Ramdas has tried these methods, but he found that they are not suitable for us. Devotion and surrender to God is the easiest way. Let us be conscious that we are His children and He is dwelling in our heart. Then we must commune with Him through prayer, and He will guide and lead us. He will fill us with His grace so that our life may be pure in thought, word and deed. In this way He makes us utterly divine. We shall now be free from all temptations and can freely move in the world as if we have put on an armour against which nothing can prevail. We are protected by the Divine in every way. This is the life which Ramdas has been leading for the last thirty-three years. When his mind became restless, he prayed to God to give him constant remembrance. Thereafter His holy name was constantly on his lips.

HOW TO REPEAT GOD'S NAME

How are we to repeat God's name? It should not be with pride. If you repeat the Name with pride, you will not get any benefit. If you are humble and meek, then alone you will derive real benefit. This is Ramdas' experience. The real thing we have to do is to keep up a continuous stream of God-remembrance, and that is possible by taking His holy name with all devotion, faith and love. Then you will discover tremendous changes taking place in you. Your mind will become crystal pure and you will find God's power and light reflecting in you. You will at once become conscious of God whom you have been seeking. You will feel His presence within you, everywhere about you. You will see

the whole universe as the expression of Divinity. This, the highest vision, the simple but the most powerful name of God will give you.

No doubt, we are all struggling in so many ways to attain God, to realise Him, but we harbour within us the sense of ego. We think we are doing everything by our own power. The result is that our efforts do not become fruitful. We fall at every step so long as the egoism persists. When the ego-sense is eradicated, we realise that God is all in all. Let the ego struggle on until it comes to know that by its efforts and by its own power it cannot achieve anything great and real. Then it bends down before God and acknowledges its helplessness. Now God becomes our helper. There is a word in Sanskrit — Anatha Natha — which means the Helper of the helpless. This is an attribute of God. How can He become our friend when we think we are capable of taking care of ourselves? God is not far away from us. When we realise our helplessness and go to Him in a spirit of complete surrender, depending entirely upon Him, His grace is bound to flow into us and transform us. All the evils in us will disappear that very instant. We are changed into the very expressions of Divinity. His light, power and glory will shine out in us and we become His embodiments. By attaining this state we will love all beings alike without any distinction, because a heart in which God has manifested, will pour out love towards the whole creation. This highest vision has been held out as the greatest attainment of a devotee. The Bhagavad Gita presents this vision before mankind, which is to look upon the whole universe as the form of the universal Truth — God.

GRACE LIBERATES

Today's subject is 'How to control the mind'. Let us make all efforts until we know that by our striving we cannot get Him and that by His grace alone we can attain Him. When this knowledge dawns, our struggle ceases. Then we surrender to Him and call on Him to free us from the earthly bonds which do not permit us to raise ourselves to the divine consciousness.

Jesus has rightly said that the Kingdom of Heaven is within us. We seek Him everywhere else, while all the time He is within us. He is the Soul of our soul. He is the Life of our life. We do everything by His will and power. We have ignored this fact. We feel we have nobody to look after us. We have so many

cares and anxieties and are ever in a state of unrest, because we have not recognised God's existence. If we follow up the teachings of Jesus, we shall surely find Him in our heart. When we have found Him we shall have fulfilled the purpose of our life. If we are born only to enjoy the senses, we could as well have been animals. Why should God give us the gift of speaking and the gift of understanding or discrimination? All these He has given us in order that we may use them for realising Him. Let us in our humble way attune ourselves with Him from day to day, and ultimately surrender to Him and see that His power works in us. Then we can safely walk on the path that leads us to Him.

RENUNCIATION — NOT EXTERNAL

It is not by mere external renunciation that we attain Him. There are so many who have renounced the world and gone to the forests, but they have not attained Him. Many others living in the world and sincerely dedicating their work to God have found Him. It is not the external condition that matters so much as our inner state of mind. If we dedicate our life to Him, it does not matter where we live. We can live in the family and still have Him, because God is not in caves and forests; He is in us, with us and everywhere about us. So to realise Him we need not go anywhere.

It appears a man, not finding God in the world, left the world and went to the forest far away from the haunts of men, and stayed there in a cave, feeling that the company of worldly people was not at all favourable for realising God. He did his austerities in the solitude and prayed to God to show Himself to him. He prayed for long years. Finally God gave him His vision in the form of the world. The man now felt how foolish he was to leave the world and come away, when the world itself was God. He went back to the world.

The world is pervaded by Him, rather the world is God Himself. He is in our heart. Why should we run away from Him? Do you think in solitude alone you can have Him? Solitude may be necessary in order to find Him within, so that the outside noises may not disturb our communion with Him. Ramdas remembers the famous words of Emerson, 'The great man is he who enjoys the sweetness of solitude in the midst of the crowd.' This is a wonderful saying. This is possible when you are in tune with God. We feel that He is our constant companion even

when we are moving about amidst the crowd, when we know that the crowd itself is the expression of God. Then we cannot say that God is far away, while He can be seen before us in so many forms. It is in that spirit Ramdas is moving about in the midst of people everywhere in the world. He finds God in every form he beholds — the supreme Beloved of his. He is in the heart of every one of you. The Lord says, 'I dwell in the heart of every being and creature.'

HINTS FOR MIND CONTROL

With regard to control of mind, Ramdas will give you some hints. Whatever work you are doing, know that you are doing it by the will of God. Even when you are taking His name, feel that God has put His name in your tongue. If you do so with full surrender to Him, the name of God will taste very sweet. Your mind will be intoxicated with joy. You may chant the name of God in any way you like, mentally or vocally, and you will find it yields you nothing but nectar.

Ramdas has experience of this. He is not telling this from books. From the time God's name came to his lips, he had felt he was blessed. He had unshakable faith in the Name. He found that Name and God are not different. Name itself is God. The moment he started uttering the Name, he made out it was not a means to an end, but an end in itself. His heart welled up with joy and peace. Just as when you put a lozenge into your mouth, it does not take time to give you sweetness, so also the moment you take God's name, the eternal spring within you gushes out as it were, and you are filled with all joy and peace; in all parts of your being there are nothing but the vibrations of joy. That is how Ramdas lost himself in that Consciousness. He found it was not difficult to control the mind and eradicate all evils from it through the Name. Automatically it happened.

When our heart is filled with divine light and peace, where is the chance for other desires to enter it; where is the place for dislike and illwill? When the mind is absorbed in God, it cannot think of anything else; in that state you live and act, and you never do wrong. You are never tempted. Even if you are tempted, you never fall under its spell, because you are under the protection of God. So this child fearlessly travels to all places, and God in His mysterious way protects him, guides and leads him, and feeds and looks after him.

You may look upon Jesus as the very incarnation of God. Do not think that he is merely a human being. Many people doubt how God can assume a human form made up of flesh and blood. This is a mistake. Truly, God reveals Himself as a human being to save and liberate us. So, Jesus is an incarnation of God just as we in India have Rama, Krishna, Buddha and others. You can visualise his form as it is handed down to us in pictures, statues and images. Bring the image in your mind and take his sweet Name. You will find that your mind gets concentration immediately.

Or, if you take the Name itself as your safest guide to take you to God, then repeat the Name. The charming sound of that Name will enable you to concentrate upon God. Your mind will be drawn towards it. Whenever you hear the name of any object which you love most, the sound of that name is dear to you. Thus the name of your child, whom you love deeply, sounds very sweet to you. You are never tired of hearing its name; whenever you take it or somebody utters it, your mind is at once turned to the child, because you love the child. So, if you have real love for God, then His name must sound sweet to you and your mind will easily attain concentration. A snake-charmer in India brings before you a serpent which moves about here and there. He takes his flute and plays on it. The serpent now stands still, while it listens to the music. Similarly, the mind that listens with love to the Divine name is at once arrested. It stops its distracting activities and becomes completely still. In that mental stillness God reveals Himself. It is said in the Bible, 'Be still and know that I am God.' If you want to realise that you are one with Him, let your mind be perfectly still. Stillness is achieved by regaling the mind with the sweetness of God's name.

There is another way of controlling the mind. Whatever you think of, take it to be God, so that your mind may be permanently thinking only of Him to the exclusion of everything else. The mind may wander as it likes. Whenever it thinks of an object, identify that object with God. Then the mind will be filled with only God-thought.

Another method is to watch the mind. When you sit in silent meditation — this indeed requires practice — you have to watch the mind, detaching yourself from its activities. Repetition of God's name helps to get this type of meditation. God is the still, calm, changeless, all-pervading Spirit. You sit silent,

watching the mind. When you say, 'My mind is restless', that means you are not the mind. You falsely think that you are the mind. You are the possessor of the mind. In this attitude you sit silent, by yourself, and watch the mind which is not yourself. As you become more and more detached from the mind and become the watcher, the mind becomes still, all thoughts disappear automatically. What will happen then? The mind will dissolve completely and you will have the super-conscious experience that you are one with the Divine within you. You will realise that you are the supreme universal Spirit. In that state there is nothing but God.

RAMDAS' EXPERIENCES

For two years Ramdas was remembering God by simply repeating His name. He did not know then what meditation was. But he put upon himself many restrictions. He was adjusting his diet and active life in such a way as to have constant remembrance of God. He had his fasts and vigils. After one or two years, one day God inspired him to sit for meditation. He did not know what meditation was. Still he sat down in a particular posture and closed his eyes. At once his mind merged in a strange ecstasy. His body-idea was lost and in that state of self-absorption he remained for about three hours. It was not yet a state in which he lost total consciousness of the body. The joy he felt was inexpressible. He could not easily come out of that state. He sat still and it was after some struggle that he regained external consciousness. Then he was gifted with a new vision. He saw one light pervading everywhere. It was not the light of the lamp or the sun, the moon or the stars. It was a strange subtle light that shone everywhere, and the mind had been sublimated entirely. He felt nothing but ecstasy, peace, joy and love. This was all brought about by the repetition of God's name.

God had made Ramdas very humble from the very start. He gave him the name which means 'Servant of God'. Later on He made him His child. Now he is a child going about talking of God. He wants him to talk about Him to all of you here and also to other friends whom he meets in the course of his tour. They all like to hear Ramdas because he speaks out of his own experience. God provides everything. You have only to depend upon Him and He will afford you all that is necessary for your progress. The Lord says in the Bhagavad Gita: "To those who worship Me

alone thinking of no other, to those ever harmonious, I bring full security." That has been found perfectly true in Ramdas' life. Ramdas let himself go completely and depended on God so utterly that he went about in India just like a wandering child. He had nothing with him except one piece of cloth. India is a vast country. Roaming in India is no joke, entirely depending upon God. God looked after this child wonderfully, clothed him and fed him.

Our dependence on God must be absolute. It is not that we must purify ourselves first and then go to Him. He must purify us. We must go to Him like a child. A child goes dirty to the mother. The mother does not reject it or ask it to come clean. She takes the child, washes it, and dresses it with clean clothes. God is more loving than an earthly mother.

Now you know the answer to the question, 'How to control the mind.' It is so very simple. You need not have any strenuous discipline. Simply put yourself in the hands of God. Surrender yourself to Him and keep your mind always in tune with Him by taking His sweet name. It is such a happy and blissful exercise. It is not a discipline at all; it is a joy. Then the thing is done, and His grace descends. Purification, control, concentration and meditation are all achieved without any strain. It is not by struggling hard for a long time that you get the result. The result is attained at the start itself. Beginning is the goal. When you put your feet on the path, you are at the goal.

Let us now sit silently for five minutes. Think of God within you, and pray to Him to give you the experience of Him within you and everywhere about you.

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA, U. S. A.,

17th October, 1954

Speech at the Y. M. C. A.

DIVINE LOVE AND SERVICE

Dear Friends, — Ramdas is going to speak to you today on a subject which is very dear to his heart, viz., Divine Love and Service. Before we attempt to comprehend the full significance of Divine love, let us try to know the difference between the two kinds of love — human love and Divine love. Human love relates to the physical and mental side of our life. Divine love relates to the spiritual side of our life. We love our relations and friends because of our physical and mental affinity towards them. This is not the sort of love that will make us unite with another in the way in which Jesus Christ wants us to do. He said, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself.' He used the word 'self' there. 'Self' does not mean mind or body. It is something superior to these, that which is permanent in us. On the basis of the knowledge of the permanent in us and in others, we have to love our neighbour.

Our neighbour is only apparently different from us. He is essentially one with us, because the one God who pervades everywhere, who is the omnipresent Spirit, is residing in the hearts of all. We have to love another on the basis of this knowledge, that we are one with the other in Spirit. This spiritual oneness it is that makes us really love another as we love ourselves. So, what we have to do is to get rid of the individual sense that gives us the feeling that we are separate from our fellow-beings. This can go only when, in meditation, we identify ourselves with the universal Spirit — God — and in all our actions tune our life with the universal Life, which is nothing but the expression of the universal Spirit. If we wish to identify ourselves with the universal Spirit, we must live such a life as will enable us to realise this Truth. We are therefore asked to be forgiving, compassionate and kind to all living beings on earth. We must serve others who are in distress and help those who need help. By such services we shall be expanding our vision, and this will enable us to mingle our life with the universal Life.

BE ONE WITH THE UNIVERSAL SPIRIT

As it is, we feel we are different from the rest of the world. This is the cause of our misery and bondage. The moment we shed our ego-sense by uniting our life with the universal Life, we realise we are the universal Spirit. We have forgotten that Spirit and feel separate from it. We thereby degrade ourselves and cause unhappiness to others. If we want to enjoy the bliss of eternal life, we must give up the ego-sense by surrendering ourselves to the divine power, and by identifying ourselves with the supreme, all-pervading, calm and changeless omnipresent Spirit — God. So, our prayers must be to unite ourselves with the Divine within us and make our life as an offering, as an oblation, to His service, so that we can attune our individual life with the universal Life — the manifest aspect of the Divine.

Now Ramdas will speak about the teachings of great incarnations of the world — Buddha, Christ and Krishna — with regard to the attainment of this universal vision based on the realisation of the Cosmic Spirit. When we feel separate from others, we have no love. Love is acquired by realising the supreme Spirit. Jesus is an embodiment of love because he is the incarnation of the Spirit. When we feel one with others in Spirit, our love freely flows towards them; we cannot help loving and serving them. In their service we get real joy and peace.

If we want to release our life from the fetters of bondage, we must realise God — the universal Spirit. That is why we are having prayers and meditations so that we can merge our life with the universal Life and our spirit with the universal Spirit. Those who have realised their oneness with God behold the whole universe as His manifestation. An example that stands predominantly in Ramdas' mind is that of Rev. C. F. Andrews, who went out to India and came in contact with Rabindranath Tagore, who was a Vedantin.

TEACHING OF YAJNAVALKYA

When Rev. Andrews went to see Tagore, he raised the question as to how he could really understand the meaning of Jesus' words, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself.' He was puzzled as to how it could be possible between two separate individuals, to love each other as one self. It is very hard to comprehend the words of great souls when they speak from their height of God-

vision. Tagore then told him that the key to this problem was in the Upanishads.

There is a conversation in the Upanishads between a great sage and his wife who lived in ancient times. His name was Yajnavalkya. One day his wife came to him and asked for the knowledge of the Immortal. He said, "You can have the knowledge of the Immortal even in your everyday active life by loving everybody as yourself." She again asked how this could be possible. He replied, "The Self within you and the Self within another is one and the same. So love your husband not for the sake of the husband, but for the sake of the Self. Love your son not for the sake of the son, but for the sake of the Self Love everybody, because he is not a mere body as he appears to be, but he is your own Self." When this conversation was explained to Rev. Andrews, he was satisfied.

So when we look at this question in the light of Self-knowledge, we find the right solution. We have no reason to think that we are essentially different from others due to caste, creed, colour or nationality. We are all children of one God — expressions, forms or embodiments of one Spirit. If we only know this, we shall have no quarrel with our fellow-beings. We shall live in perfect harmony and peace. Everyone will enjoy the supreme bliss and peace through union with that Truth pervading everywhere. Therefore it is said, love is the light of the eternal, and is the best solvent for dissolving diversity and creating unity, to destroy discord and create harmony.

A MAHABHARATA STORY

In the Mahabharata, the great epic of the Hindus, we read a story about Yudhishtira, a great king of that time, who led a perfectly virtuous life. He was loving, kind and generous to everybody. His love for others was so great that he could not see any evil in them. There was another prince in the same kingdom, Duryodhana, who was of a bad nature. He was a tyrant and people hated him. It so happened one day Lord Krishna called these two and first asked Yudhishtira to go out into the kingdom and find out a bad man. Yudhishtira sought for a bad man everywhere and returned and said that he could not find a bad man. Lord Krishna then asked the other one, Duryodhana, to go out and find a good man. After a long search he also returned and said that he could not find a good man anywhere.

The moral of this story is that if we are good, the whole world is good for us; if we are bad, the whole world is bad for us. Every man has got some good points in him. We should see only the good points. If we are to see the bad points, let us see them in ourselves. If we do so, we shall find in course of time that what is bad in us will disappear. If we see evil in others and good in us, what good we have will disappear and the evil in us will grow. We are condemning, criticising, and thinking ill of so many in the world. By so doing we are only getting our mind more and more impure. So, the way to progress is to see the good points in others and love everybody. If there are some evil points in us—such as ego-sense and bad desires—we must repent and pray to God for their removal. To see good in others is to see God in them, because God alone is good. By seeing God in others, we shall realise God in our own heart. So long as we criticise others, we shall never see God in them. •

When a man does not love his brother, and still says he loves God, he is a liar. If you have true love for God, you must love all beings in the world, because He is seated in the hearts of them all. To hate anybody is to hate God. So, the criterion to find whether we really have love for God is whether we have love for our fellow-beings. Our love must be such that it should not see faults in others. It is that love that redeems, uplifts and illumines people. It is that love that pours out from the eyes and hearts of saints and sages. You contact them, and they never condemn you for your faults. They uplift you, purify you, and enlighten you with the knowledge of the Eternal.

LOVE THAT SEES NO FAULT

There are two kinds of love—love that sees faults and then forgives, and love that does not see faults at all. Which is greater? Love that does not see faults. We have seen so many sages in India, living in forests, having wild beasts as their companions. In the ordinary course, these wild beasts would pounce upon human beings; but in the company of these saints, they are like tame animals that play with them. The saint sees God in them and therefore they are so friendly, so calm. Ramdas had his experience when a serpent wound round his leg. He was looking upon it as God's own form and had no fear. Why are we afraid? Because we live in diversity. When we behold the Divine everywhere, whom are we to be afraid of? We become fearless.

When we are one with the universal Spirit, where is 'another' to be afraid of?

When we act in ignorance, we do not recognise the kinship of the Spirit. So what we do is that we think others are different from us and we fight with them. We hate them, exploit them and do so many evils on the plane of duality. Ignorance is the root of all our troubles. If we only take a leap into the infinite Existence — God — who is the basis of the entire manifest life in the universe, we are free from the sense of separation and become the happiest beings on earth. We are then the embodiments of divine love and joy. It is love that changes the hearts of persons. It is not by condemnation that we can reform others. By a loving touch we can transform a man, just as by a touch of the philosopher's stone we can turn the basest metal into gold.

LOVE THAT REDEEMS

Ramdas had experiences like that. Once it happened that a man who had no faith in God wanted to pick up a quarrel with Ramdas. He wanted to come to the Ashram. News of this came to Ramdas in advance, with the advice from friends that the man should not be allowed to enter the Ashram as he was not a person of good character. Ramdas did not like the advice. Meanwhile, the person came to the Ashram. As soon as he entered, Ramdas went to greet him and gave him a warm, loving embrace. That embrace did the thing. At once he became a changed man. He fell at Ramdas' feet saying, "You are a holy man. You have touched me and embraced me." He went into ecstasies and from that time his whole life was changed. If Ramdas had stopped him from coming, he would have gone away becoming still worse. The best way was to love him because he lived in ignorance.

Did not Christ forgive those who crucified him? Was it an ordinary love that forgave freely all that was done against him? It is love that comes from such great souls that redeems us. When love is there, there is bubbling joy. No sacrifice is too great to relieve the distress of humanity. Jesus made a supreme sacrifice by giving his life on the cross. From this you can make out how great was his love for us. If you only think of it you will be thrilled.

All the great sages and saints were persecuted much, because they were lovers of humanity. They wanted to serve humanity and redeem those who were fallen. But people did not under-

stand and they persecuted and killed them. The more they were persecuted the more their greatness was revealed. Goldsmith had said that great souls are like aromatic leaves. If you crush the leaves, the perfume spreads out everywhere. So also under persecution the glory of saints manifests. They live in the Spirit and never care what happens to the flesh. How are they disposed towards those who persecute them? They are all love, compassion and forgiveness. They pray to God to forgive them. They do not condemn or curse them. From the heart of saints curses never come.

GOD NEVER PUNISHES

God never punishes. By our own action, we reward or punish ourselves. God is ever forgiving. He does not reject us. We have only to turn towards Him, and He purifies us by His grace. God is therefore defined as love. 'You will find the same definition about God given in all religions. He is our mother and father. The human mother or father may sometimes punish us, but God never punishes us. He is million times more loving than the earthly mother. If we find the Divine Mother residing in our heart and we feel one with Her, how sublime our life becomes !

SERVE HIM IN HUMANITY

We see so much suffering in the world. Those who relieve such suffering are nearer to God than others. Our love that goes towards the sufferers destroys the walls of separation between us and them. Do not think that we shall ever be in want if we help our brethren and depend upon God. Good things are coming to us only for serving Him in the form of humanity. If we think we have earned them by hard labour, wherefrom did we get the strength to labour? Surely the power came from Him. We must be beholden to Him for what He has given us. We should offer them at His feet for His service. Feed those who are hungry; clothe those who are naked; educate those who are illiterate. Give light to those who are in the dark about God, so that they may be aware of Him.

GIFT OF DEVOTION IS HIGHEST

Gifts are said to be of three kinds — gift of food, gift of education, and gift of devotion. If you give food, it will appease one's

hunger only once. If you give education to one, that will enable him to earn his bread. But the soul-hunger cannot be appeased by either of these gifts. That food is devotion to God. By that the soul gets satisfaction and attains everlasting peace. 'Truly, to awaken man and inspire him to devote himself to God, to aim at the realisation of God, is the greatest gift that can be conferred on him. This is what the saints do. They intensify the hunger of those who have a little hunger for God, and they create hunger in those who have no hunger.

If one loves us, how happy we feel! If the whole world loves us, how much happier we must feel! God says, 'If you give Me one unit of love, I will give you million units of love.' What we have to do is to love God with all our heart. We shall then get in return infinite love from Him. There is a saying by an Indian saint, 'When God becomes your friend, the whole world is friendly to you.' We complain that people dislike us. That is because we have no love for them. If we love them, their love automatically flows to us. When their love comes to us and our love again goes to them, the two streams mingle together and create a wider river of joy. It is not bargaining. It is not a 'give and take'. It is only a spontaneous outflow of our love uniting with the love of all beings on the plane of life, founded on the oneness of the Spirit.

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA, U. S. A.,

18th October, 1954.

*At Mr. J. R. Raymer's Residence, 316 Stonebridge Blva.,
St. Paul 5.*

GOD IS THE DEITY OF YOUR HEART

Beloved Friends, — Everybody wants God. But they do not know where to find Him. They think that He is somewhere outside. This is a mistake they make. They try to see Him in churches, mosques, temples, caves, mountains and the like. They pray to a God who is far away in the heaven. As Jesus has rightly said, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is within you.' This is the great secret he taught to his disciples. A devotee was once told to seek God in places of pilgrimage, shrines and temples. He wandered all over India, visited all the temples, bathed in all sacred rivers, but with all this he could not find God. Then in a state of despair, he sat on a stone and reflected within himself that his life had been wasted as he could not find God. In this state his mind was drawn within. From within God spoke to him: 'I am here'. There is a saying, 'Be still and know that I am God'. The mind must be perfectly waveless, free from all thoughts, calm and serene. It is then that you become conscious of God within you. Just as you cannot clearly see your face reflected in moving waters, but you see the reflection when the water is still, so you cannot have the consciousness of God so long as the mind is restless. But when the mind is still, He reveals Himself to you in your heart. In such a pure and waveless state, mind as such does not exist, the Divine Spirit alone exists. The Spirit is universal.

When you know that the universal Spirit is in you, you rise above the body-idea. When you know you are one with that Spirit, whatever you behold in the external world is for you nothing but the expression of the Spirit. Now you do not see any duality or diversity — not only spiritually, but even in the manifestation. Your love goes out towards the whole creation so much so that you are above body consciousness even when you are active. Because, in this vision you are filled with a strange ecstasy that 'overpowers and absorbs you. You live in a state of perennial joy because you attain an equal vision, where all

diversity resolves into unity, all discord into harmony and all multiplicity into oneness. In this ineffable experience you feel you are the very embodiment of the Divine. Your heart is absolutely pure. It will never be disturbed by a single wave of desire.

The great saints and sages who have realised the Truth have been dinning into our ears that God is within us. In the Bhagavad Gita, God has Himself said, 'I am seated in the hearts of all beings in the world. I am pervading everywhere. All are in Me and I am in all'. This is the great message which has been handed to us also by the great souls who have realised God, who are to us His very embodiments. They are permeated with divine love, joy and bliss. It is by the contact of such great souls that we are awakened and we get the necessary strength to walk on the path. By their grace we achieve the fullness of spiritual experience.

Therefore contact of saints is essential. Without their help we cannot step on the path. The impersonal God cannot have any relationship with us. We must be devoted to the personal God. The saint is one who has realised both the personal and the impersonal. The cosmic Spirit is present before us in the form of saints, in the form of Incarnations of the world. Their grace must pour into us. Then only we are inwardly awakened, and by traversing the path we reach the end of our spiritual journey, i. e., God-realisation. Then we know that we and God are not different. As Jesus said, 'I and my Father are one'.

Buddha too, in the state of Nirvana, did not see any duality. All the desires became extinct in him. He rose above the body consciousness and merged in the cosmic consciousness above all diversity. He could not define his experience of the impersonal because it was simply indescribable. He taught, 'Do not dip the string of thought into the unfathomable. He who questions errs and he who answers errs.' When you enter the realm of the all-pervading Spirit there is no separation. You merge in the supreme Self; in other words, your little self is dissolved in the universal Self. What it is and what it is not is beyond your comprehension. You can only realise it. Those who have thus realised it are the images of that supreme Reality, concretised expressions of it.

SAINTS MAKE SAINTS

It is said by an Indian saint that if we contact a God-realised soul, he transforms us into his own likeness. The example is

given of the sandalwood trees in the forest. They say that by the effect of the breeze blowing from the sandalwood trees, in course of time, the other trees close by also turn into sandalwood trees. So also by the association or company of saints, a worldly man becomes a saint. The saint's influence gradually transforms a man. That is why it is said we must keep the company of saints, serve them, hear their words and bask in the sunshine of their presence. But at the same time we must see that we come under their influence. We must keep the door of our heart open to it. When the sun's light falls on the lotus bud, it blossoms and gives out its fragrance and beauty. So when our heart is ready to receive grace and we come in contact with saints, our life-bud blossoms and gives out its fragrance in the form of overflowing love and joy. Our life becomes utterly transformed and illumined. That is how saints come into being.

Sri Shankara has composed a verse which means, 'In the first place you must contact a saint. Then your mind will be withdrawn from the external things of the world. Ultimately it will be free from all desires and become perfectly still. When it becomes perfectly still, the aspirant attains liberation.'

SWAMI RAMA TIRTHA'S EXPERIENCE

Many years ago, when Swami Rama Tirtha came to America, he addressed large audiences. Rama Tirtha had, of course, the vision and the realisation of the universal Reality. So he had addressed the audience, 'Myself in the form of ladies and gentlemen!': 'Universe in the form of ladies and gentlemen!' When an American friend asked him, 'Who are you?', his reply was, 'I am God, so are you'.

This was the experience of that great soul. Those who have merged their individuality in the universal Self, do not see anything as separate from them. They see everything as their own manifestation. In that way they live and move in the world. They are incapable of harbouring illwill or dislike for anyone on this earth. They have no selfish motives. Their life flows out like springs from the mountains. They are a blessing to humanity. What wonderful attainment it is for a human being, less than 6 ft. high, to realise that he is one with the universal Spirit, the eternal, changeless, infinite and all-pervading God! What a magnificent gift of God it is to have a human birth! But we do not make use of it for the right and supreme purpose.

There is a song of a Muslim saint which means, 'When I hear a fish, living in the water, say it feels thirsty, I cannot but laugh.' So also are we living and moving in an infinite ocean of bliss; still we say we are miserable. How is it that we are miserable and why should we be? The saint has given his reply to the question as to why the fish is thirsty and does not take water to quench its thirst even when living and moving in water. It is said that the fish moves upright cutting through the water, and that unless it slightly turns to one side, water cannot enter its mouth. Similarly, unless we bend down before God, the universal Spirit, unless we give up our pride, we cannot experience the bliss, even though we are actually living in bliss. It is by surrender that we become one with Him and enjoy ineffable bliss and peace. God is pure bliss, nothing but bliss, unalloyed bliss.

THE SECRET OF FREEDOM AND HAPPINESS

This is the quest of the man who aspires for eternal happiness and peace. Somehow we feel we are different from God and that is the trouble with us. The moment we know we are one with Him, we are free. Otherwise we are in bondage, which is self-imposed. God is the only reality. There is none else but God. True happiness and peace are in God and nowhere else. Do not think that by any external change of circumstances or conditions, you can make yourself free and happy. It is a perfectly false idea. No earthly attainment such as wealth, health, position and social status or power can make one happy, if one is not in tune with God inwardly. What joy can we get from the world? It is only momentary joy like a flicker in the darkness of the night. It is like will-o'-the-wisp, like a mirage. The senses do not give us real happiness. There is always discontent and dissatisfaction. There is no calmness or serenity, which can be had only when we tune our life with the eternal life. From the perishables we cannot expect everlasting peace and joy. Only through communion with the Eternal we can get immortal peace and joy.

In his wandering life in the early days, when Ramdas was going about as a mendicant, without anything with him, depending entirely upon God, God used to feed him and look after him in His inscrutable ways. He was invited by the Maharajas who took him to their palaces, made him sit on their decorated chairs, themselves sitting on the floor, and asked him, 'How did you find that joy which is beaming on your face?' You

do not own anything, still you are supremely happy. We are rolling in wealth and have all the earthly comforts, still we are unhappy. You are a mendicant walking in the streets, not knowing where you will get your next meal. But how happy you are! How did you attain this?' Ramdas told them, that he had uprooted the ego-sense which was responsible for all the miseries of man. He added, 'When the ego-sense is gone, every situation which God gives you, makes you happy and not at all miserable. Because, you do not depend any longer upon the external conditions for happiness. Man depends upon them and consequently suffers. The happy man is he whose mind is always attuned to the divine Life and Spirit. Ramdas has found happiness within, while you are searching for it outside. Turn your mind within, and you will find there the source of joy.'

Many years ago, Ramdas was thinking that he was separate from God. He was taking His name and praying to Him so that he may be merged in His all-pervading, all-transcendent Being. But gradually light dawned in him by which he realised that the difference between him and God was false. Then God spoke to Ramdas, 'You call yourself My servant. But you and I are one.' His grace came in such abundance that the ego totally disappeared, just as darkness disappears when light is brought. So by continuous thought of Him the ego-sense was completely destroyed. Ramdas found out that he and the supreme Being are one.

For realising God you are not to go anywhere. It is not in any particular place or particular time that you can have Him. But you will be able to have Him at all places and at all times, because He is everywhere and for ever. He is now here with us. We can feel Him. We can be conscious of Him and recognise His presence all round.

Happiness and misery are only attitudes of the mind. You think something is for your happiness and you are happy. If you think it is for your unhappiness, you are miserable. If you find God, who is eternal happiness, within you, then you need not care what your external condition is. In that state, pleasure and pain will be the same to you. A lump of earth and a bar of gold will have no difference for you, because you have no attraction for the one and no repulsion for the other. You do not care what happens to you from outside. Success and failure, honour and dishonour, praise and blame, all will be the same to you. You remain unaffected because your heart is ever filled with divine

bliss which is eternal. When you are blissful, you do not feel the passing of time; nay, you are unconscious of it. You live then in eternity. When you live in eternity, you are all round happy.

HAPPY MAN IS THE MOST GENEROUS MAN

When we are blissful we mean or do no harm to anybody. We are trying to exploit and do evil to others because we are discontented. A happy man is the most generous man. Suppose a person wants a job. He approaches a big boss for the purpose. He first goes to the latter's servant, asks him if the boss is in and if so, whether he has taken his food, and if he can see him. The servant asks the person why he wants to know if the boss has taken his food or not. Then the visitor replies that it is only after food the boss would be happy, and that was the proper time for him to request for a job. If asked before the boss had his food, there was every likelihood of an outright refusal, because he would be then not in a happy mood.

So when you become the happiest man, you become the most generous man. You will try your best to make all others happy like yourself. Whatever you have and whatever you get, you will freely give away for the good of the world. You will be most liberal and love will naturally flow out of you towards everybody. It is said that when a man laughs, the whole world laughs with him. When a man weeps, he weeps alone. Because, everybody wants happiness, everybody wants to laugh. So laugh yourself first on attaining the infinite joy in yourself and make everybody else happy.

GIVE UP EGO

So long as we have the ego-sense, we can never be happy. We must shed the ego-sense by surrendering ourselves to God, by meditating on Him and identifying ourselves with Him. It is only the ego-sense and not the ego. Ego-sense is a consciousness which is superimposed on us. We don't know how it arose. If we try to get at the seed of the onion, we do not find it because it is not there. Similarly you search for the ego, and you do not find it because it does not exist. But it is better to make the attempt for finding out the ego. For, your mind that goes in search of the ego, not finding it, dissolves in the Eternal Spirit and you realise that you are that Spirit.

DO NOT BE CAUGHT IN THE WHEEL OF TIME

People do not know this. They are not satisfied with what they get of worldly things. Dissatisfaction and discontent make their life miserable. They are caught in the wheel of time. As a philosopher has rightly said, 'We are sitting on the rim of the wheel of time and are whirling on it, forgetting the axle'. If we go to the axle we are safe, because the axle does not change or move. It would be well to catch hold of the axle and still move on the rim of the wheel. You can be at both points at the same time.

The Bhagavad Gita also teaches us, 'Do action as if you have not done action'. Be steadily fixed in the highest Reality and then do actions in the world. Then you will be active and inactive at the same time. It will be then a spontaneous outflow of divine energy from you for the good of humanity, without your being conscious that you are doing good to anyone. If anybody praises you for what you have done, you will say you have not done anything at all, because inwardly you are actionless though outwardly you are active. In other words, you might say, 'God does everything. I am only an instrument in His hands. By His power I am doing all things. So do not praise me, but praise Him'. You know well that you are not the actor. God within you is the doer and you are only a vehicle. Lastly you will have to say that the vehicle is also He!

THE BEST PRAYER

There are so many struggling to purify their minds, but they do not have any success because they are egoistic. Egoistic struggle does not lead us far. We must bow down before Him, surrender to Him. Say, 'O God! I am nothing. You are everything.' They say that the best prayer is that which God puts into our mouth. So let Him make us pray to Himself for the right thing. Let us not pray to Him for the things we consider best, but which might prove to be really harmful. There was a poem which Ramdas read many years ago, entitled 'Unanswered Prayers'. The Poet said: 'O God! My prayer to you is that You should not grant my prayers. In my foolishness I am asking for so many things which may not be good for me. I leave everything to You. You know what is best for me'.

The child in its folly asks the mother for a knife to play with.

The mother knows the knife would hurt the child and so she does not grant the child's wish. If the child leaves to the mother to do what she likes for him, then she will do the best for him. God is called Providence. He is the provider. He provides us with what we need. We should not ask for material things. Ask Him only to give us true devotion which will ultimately make us realise that we are one with Him.

'First seek the Kingdom of Heaven and everything else will be added unto you'. These are the words of Jesus. How true they are! But we are asking for name, fame, power, and we get more and more involved in these worldly things and forget Him. If we leave it to Him, He will give us what is good. Let us be satisfied with what He gives. Therefore it is said, we should not be discontented with the situations in which He places us. But discontent there should be for our not having progressed sufficiently on the path and attained the vision of God. Let us only aspire for Him. Let us pray, 'O God! Make my mind pure. I have been told by sages that You are within me. But I am not aware of You. Make me aware of You.'

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA, U. S. A.

19th October, 1954.

Second Speech at the Y. M. C. A.

POWER OF PRAYER

Dear Friends, — The subject on which Ramdas is asked to speak today is 'Power of Prayer'. Prayer presupposes a belief in the existence of God. Otherwise we would not pray. We therefore take it for granted even before we have seen God, that He does exist. This faith in His existence comes to us from the teachings of saints and sages who have seen Him. Now, taking for granted that God exists, we have next to know where He is. There also the saints have taught us that God dwells within us. Heart is the place in which God resides. Having known where He dwells, we have to see Him and realise Him and live in the light of His guidance. This is possible only by contacting God. That contact is possible only through prayer.

A MEANS TO COMMUNION

Prayer is a means by which we communicate with Him and open up a relationship with Him. We look upon Him as father, mother, friend, master or Lord. We consider ourselves to be His children, servants or friends. This relationship brings us nearer to Him, and our prayer then becomes very real to us. When we look upon Him as our master, we pray to Him to guide us so that we may always walk on the path of righteousness without going astray. God, who is dwelling within, listens to our prayer, responds to it and grants us the necessary strength to walk always on the path of Truth. This power we derive by prayer. Prayer should be done with the sole object of attaining the knowledge of our oneness with Him.

The word 'knowledge' is rightly used here, because we are ever one with Him, but we do not know this. As we do not know it, we are like children who have missed the mother. Although the mother is with us, if we have closed our eyes, we do not see her. The moment we open our eyes we see the mother. It is not that she came there only when we opened our eyes. She was there even before, but as we had closed our eyes, we could

not see her. Similarly it is, we have closed our eyes against God within us. If we open our eyes, we shall see He is there. He has ever been there. We are not conscious of Him, we have forgotten Him, and therefore we feel we are away from Him. It is this sense of separation that makes us miserable and unhappy, and subjects us to worries, cares and anxieties. The moment we know that God is within us, and that we are always basking in the sunshine of His grace, then we feel supremely happy, like a child that has found the missing mother.

So, prayer enables us to contact God and also to feel His presence within us. As we go on remembering Him through prayer, the intensity of our longing to have Him increases, and we feel His nearness. Our mind becomes purer and purer day by day, by means of the prayer and continuous remembrance of Him. When Ramdas was struggling to know God, to realise God, to feel His presence, his one mainstay was God's holy name. He kept this all-powerful Name on his tongue always, and he felt he was very near God, because the Name gave continuous remembrance, and the remembrance developed into a consciousness in which he felt not only nearness of God, but also oneness with Him. So, Name leads us to Him without any doubt. Prayer and chanting of His name are the two things needed to find Him within us and realise our unity with Him. Ramdas had not done anything else except these two things — prayer and repetition of God's name. Whatever else he did in the way of discipline, such as fasting, going to solitude, courting the society of saints, etc., was done with the sole object of keeping up a continuous remembrance of God in his mind. Whenever God-remembrance left him, he used to feel utterly miserable. When the remembrance was there, he was perfectly happy.

THE AGONY OF SEPARATION

When you have once contacted God and derived the consequent peace and joy, separation from Him becomes unbearable. This has been the experience of all devotees of God who have tried to remember Him and feel His presence always with them. In the early days of our struggle to approach Him, there is what they call 'touch and go', going on within us. We find Him for a time and the next moment we miss Him, and we are thrown into a state of agony. This agony makes us pine for Him, and that pining and longing again brings us in contact with

Him. It is said that the feeling of the devotee who has missed Him is like the feeling of a fish thrown out of water. As the fish thirsts for water, so the devotee thirsts for God. When this state of things persists, it is easy for us to have continuous remembrance of Him. Even in separation, that intense remembrance will make us conscious of His presence within us and we will have again His union. This agony of separation is called 'Viraha' in Sanskrit.

We are living in the world and wish that we should have God. But our desire for God is so lukewarm that we do not miss Him at all. We are so much used to forgetting Him that we do not consider that it is a kind of disease in us. Our normal state is to ever live, move and have our being in Him. We are living in an abnormal or diseased state. We do not even admit that we are abnormal or diseased. When we come to admit that, we pray day and night for His grace so that we can keep our mind ever in union with Him, through constant remembrance.

Prayer should be done not with a view to get from God any material things. We are more concerned about material things when we pray to God, than about the real thing — the union with Him. We ask for all the things that God would give us, which are perishable, and which we have ultimately to leave behind when we finish this earthly career. Ramdas remembers in this connection the famous teaching of Jesus Christ, 'Seek first the Kingdom of Heaven and everything else will be added unto you.' So, what we should have is His grace, so that we can realise our oneness with Him, and feel His presence always with us. This should be the sole purpose of our prayer.

GOD'S ASSURANCE

In the Bhagavad Gita, God assures us, 'To those men who worship Me alone, thinking of no other, to those ever harmonious, I bring full security.' That means, he who has made God the goal of life and strives to attain Him, and for that purpose remembers Him constantly, him God looks after in every way. Ramdas' first year's life, as chronicled in the book 'In Quest of God', was lived by wandering from place to place all over India in a state of complete surrender to God. He had no thought of the body; he had no thought of food; he did not know where to rest. His one thought — and the only thought — was of God. When the tongue was continuously chanting God's name, his mind was in a state of absorption in the Divine. So he was not

feeling himself separate from the Divine. The world, for the time being, disappeared from his mind. When thus he wandered all over India, God in a mysterious way looked after him. Therefore the Sanskrit Sloka, the meaning of which Ramdas told you a few minutes back, is printed on the front cover page of his book 'In Quest of God' as its motto. This assurance of God has been fully testified and proved to be true in that one year's life which was only the beginning. Now, of course, it is evident that at every second of his life God is looking after him most tenderly. He has come here all the way, may be about 12,000 miles, from India. All through the journey, he was looked after by Him most carefully. When he started from India, many friends feared that he would have to undergo great hardships. But God carried out our programme so beautifully that he had not to suffer anyway in this long travel.

THE RIGHT PRAYER

Therefore it is not proper for us to ask God for any material things, but only for the things of the highest spiritual value, viz., the realisation of God. God says, 'Whatever I give you is impermanent. The Eternal is Myself. If you pray that I should be yours, I will become yours.' But we do not want Him. We want only the things that He gives, which are perishable. How can we then have eternal peace? Pray to God to become yours, or to make you His. It amounts to the same thing whether you become His, or He becomes yours, as, in either case, you ask for immortality. In immortality there is real joy and peace. There is a prayer among the Hindus, 'Lead me, O God!, from the unreal to the Real; lead me from darkness to Light; lead me from death to Immortality.' This is the right prayer for us all. Thus we shall come by the highest beatitude; we shall enjoy supreme peace here and now.

Q: What does spirituality mean?

Ramdas: That which relates to the experience of the Spirit is spirituality. We have to take at first that Spirit and matter are different. Our body is matter and the Truth dwelling in this body is Spirit. We must know we are not bodies, but that we are the immortal Spirit. Many people go with the impression that they are only bodies made up of the five elements. This is not true. There is the Spirit within us that makes us talk, walk and do everything. People think that they are moving their limbs by their own will and power. There are so many movements and

changes going on within this body, such as the functions of the digestive organs, blood circulation, growth of the hair, etc. We cannot say these things are done by us. The same power, which is responsible for the movements inside our bodies, is also responsible for the outer movements. You see that the wind blows, the sun gives light, trees grow, birds fly and sing. All these and many more movements and changes are going on about us. They are not movements caused by any separate units of power working accidentally, or by chance, or due to the fortuitous concourse of atoms. If it is so, we can very well deny the existence of a spiritual power that permeates the universe and causes all the movements in it. But this is not so. There is an all-pervading force or energy that makes us talk, walk and perform all actions. If we recognise this universal power and know that that power is responsible for all that we do, our ego will disappear, we shall be one with the universal Life and Truth, and we shall be supremely free and happy. So long as there is ego in us, we feel we are doing things ourselves, and we are caught in a trap. To get release from this self-made trap, we are asked to resign ourselves to the will of God. His will is nothing but the power of God active in nature, active in us. By surrendering ourselves to the divine power and will, we set free the supreme bliss and peace which is now locked up through the assertion of the individual will.

QUESTION OF FREE WILL

Q: What is free will and how does it stand in relationship with the Divine will?

Ramdas: Really, there is no free will. There is only Divine will working everywhere. It is a mistake to think that we, as individuals, have got any power to do anything. In the Bhagavad Gita the Lord says:

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।

आमयन्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्वारूढानि मायया ॥

'The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna, causing all beings, by His illusive power, to revolve, as if mounted on a machine.'

So, He is at the inception, at the growth and at the destruction of all things. It is the one power that causes all these to happen in the universe. If we submit to that power and know

that that power is active in us, we shall be free from the ego-sense, and realise that we are the infinite, immortal, all-pervading, universal Spirit and Truth. To know this is to live in God.

MEANING OF GOD-REALISATION

Q: Could you tell me about God-realisation or union with God that stands out strongest in your mind?

Ramdas: God-realisation is to become God Himself. When you have realised that you are the universal Truth, then you become the form and expression of the Truth. The great spiritual Masters, who come to teach mankind the path that leads to God-realisation, are concrete images of God. They are, verily, Gods walking on the earth. Because, their ego having completely vanished, God's power, wisdom, light, love and joy are manifest in them. Their contact enlightens, elevates and redeems the soul caught in the toils of this worldly life, hungering and thirsting after worldly pleasures. Surely, a soul gets liberation from the bondage in which it lives, by the contact of a God-realised soul.

Ramdas can tell you that during the early days of his spiritual practices, he had contacted a number of great saints and sages, whom he looked upon as the very embodiments of Divinity. He could clearly feel in their presence that they were not ordinary human beings. They had not only seen and realised God, but they were, verily, God Himself in those forms. Many people do not accept this assertion. They believe only in the impersonal aspect of God. But the impersonal aspect of God cannot have any concern or interest with us. Grace cannot come to you from the Impersonal, whereas you can get grace, you can get real help, from those persons who have realised the Impersonal. They are the personal forms of the Impersonal. They are the saints and sages and spiritual Masters. Their contact is essential. It is they who awaken in us the longing for God, and then guide us on the path until we reach Him. If you cry, appeal and pray to the unmanifest, the nameless and the formless, you do not get any response. Response comes from the saints, because they are the expressions of God, Who has taken human forms to redeem mankind from sin and ignorance. So their contact is most important.

So God-realisation means to become God Himself. That is how Ramdas feels about it. At the end of his Sadhana, God told

him, 'You were at one time a servant of Mine, but now I can tell you definitely that you and I are one.' One, both as the personal and impersonal. Because of oneness with the Impersonal, he is given the sight to see Him everywhere, as everybody and as everything. So, even in his active life, he has no sense of separation from Him. In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna shows to Arjuna His universal form, and Arjuna says, 'O God, I behold You everywhere inside, outside, up and down. I see You and none but You. All forms are Thine.' This vision, that came to Arjuna, frightened him because it came too suddenly. It was so grand! When we get this vision, the spiritual eminence to which we are raised acts as a shock, and the experience is simply indescribable.

RELATIONSHIP AFTER REALISATION

After seeing God everywhere, you still live in the world as an instrument, as a child, as a servant, or as a devotee of God, surrendering up yourself entirely to the Divine, knowing fully well that by His power you are actuated to do all things. People may say that if you have become one with God, where is the question of surrender. But there is surrender, because you do not wish to remain always one with Him. In the impersonal, you are one with Him. In the personal, physical aspect, you maintain a sense of separation from Him, by opening up a relationship with Him — He as master and yourself as servant. Even though there is apparent separation, you do not miss Him because of the inner realisation of the Self.

'God' is a term which does not apply only to the impersonal. It applies to the supreme Being, who is at once personal and impersonal. It is such a God whom you contact in the fullness of spiritual experience. It is strange, being God yourself, you become His servant. That is the beauty of the relationship.

FATHER AND SON

Jesus Christ's words have got the greatest significance here. He said, 'I and my Father are one.' Still he called himself the Son of the Father. When the question arose how he could show, to his disciples, God whom he had seen, and from whom he came to the earth as a saviour of humanity, he replied, 'He who sees the Son sees the Father.' Son himself is the embodiment of the

Father. 'Father' here is the impersonal Spirit and 'Son' is the Spirit born in flesh and blood as Jesus for leading humanity on the path to everlasting life. So, Son is the personal and Father is the impersonal. The personal is Jesus who had the knowledge of the impersonal. We have to become one with the Father, before we can be His true Son, as Jesus is. This is the right of every human being — the right of rising to the height to which the great spiritual Masters have reached. Saints, the spiritual Masters, take us to the Father, the impersonal, all-pervading, static, calm, immortal Spirit — our real Existence.

DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL

Q: Having once experienced God, why should we have again the dark night of the soul?

Ramdas: This is true in the case of all spiritual aspirants and devotees of God. The experience spoken of by you is only a glimpse of the Divine and not the real experience from which there is no fall. Here what we need is Grace to keep us always alert, to hold us above the dark water in which we are drowning every moment. God's grace alone can save us from the temptations of the world. Until we are illumined with the divine light, power and joy, the lower nature keeps us down, not allowing us to rise to the spiritual height. Our nature is made up of the three qualities, Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas. Sattwa is the quality of harmony, Rajas is of restlessness, and Tamas is of laziness or inertia. When we are seized with Rajas and Tamas, we are unable to remember God. Our mind runs away whenever we sit for meditation or prayer. We are lazy and sleepy. There is terrible depression in the mind. This is what is called the dark night of the soul.

When the mind rises to Rajas, it is restless, but not in a state of darkness. There are glimpses coming now and again. When the mind rises to Sattwa — the quality of harmony — the mind is steady and the person can properly meditate and feel his nearness to God. He is happy and cheerful. Man is always under the control of any one of these qualities and is enveloped by it. We are subject to them so long as we live in the lower levels of consciousness. Our struggle is to rise above these three qualities and establish ourselves in the supreme Spirit permanently.

What is needed here is the contact of a saint and his grace. God pours His grace on us through saints. His grace comes and

lifts us above the qualities of nature, and we get established in the universal Spirit, which is our real Being. Thereafter, there will be no fall, and the soul no more experiences the dark night. Our union or oneness with Him will be complete. Till we are fixed in it, there is such a thing as going upward and coming downward. If it is not possible for the person to contact a saint, the next best thing he can do is to go into solitude and humble himself before God, feel that he is nothing, lower than the dust, lower than a blade of grass, and then pray to Him, 'O Lord, take me back to you again. Raise me from this slough of despondency, from this darkness, to Yourself, and give me eternal peace.' Cry as a child does to its mother. Then by His grace directly flowing into you, you will be raised and you will gain back that contact which you had lost for the time being.

CHRIST, BUDDHA AND KRISHNA

Q: In what sense are Christ, Buddha and Krishna God, and in what sense are they men?

Ramdas: So far as Ramdas' belief goes, and that belief is based on deep spiritual experience, he looks upon Christ, Krishna and Buddha as the very embodiments of God. They are not ordinary men. God has assumed human forms for our sake. Though they look like men, they are not men. If they are mere men, we cannot get any spiritual benefit from them; but we do get great things from them. It is not from men that we get all this, but from God.

If we look upon them as men, there is no meaning in our having faith in them, taking their Names and praying to them. Millions worship these great Masters of the world and derive incalculable benefit. Such devotees are lifted and made utterly divine. Such grace, light and power coming from them cannot be taken as coming from mere human beings or men. They are fully saturated with divine radiance, peace and joy, and they simply shower love and joy on everyone who comes in contact with them. This is not possible for a human being. Thousands go to them and are saved. There is a holy aura around them. Nobody is left out from their vast all embracing love. Compare them with men and see the vast difference — as much difference as between night and day, or between a glow-worm and the sun!

Om Shantih, Shantih, Shantihi!

